

# CASE HISTORIES FROM THE PĀLI CANON I:<sup>1</sup>

## THE SĀMAÑÑAPHALA SUTTA HYPOTHETICAL CASE HISTORY *OR* HOW TO BE SURE TO WIN A DEBATE

### Case histories in contemporary psychology

It has been observed "that the great novels are source books for psychologists, or that they are case histories (i.e. illustrative, typical examples)."<sup>2</sup>

What is a case history?

In Western psychology, case histories are defined as follows:

"a compilation of information which includes all available data on background, test results, interviews, ratings, diagnoses, etc., concerning an individual subject of a study. The case-history method is most frequently utilized ... for the practical purpose of diagnosis and prognosis. However, after the study of a number of individual cases, the clinician or sociologist may formulate theoretical principles or generalisations about some aspect of behaviour."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wellek and Warren, 1966 : 35.

<sup>3</sup> Chaplin, 1975 : s.v. "case history".

"A record of an individual's experience, illnesses, education, environment, treatment, and, generally, all facts relevant to the particular problems involved in a medical or clinical case."<sup>4</sup>

The case history method is explained,

" .. This biographical method was developed and refined predominantly by the proponents of psychoanalysis .. as an instrument of research; to the analysis of life they added the investigation of experience. Case histories can be interpreted either qualitatively or quantitatively. The qualitative interpretation corresponds to the research approach of the psychology of "understanding" .. and thus psychoanalysis or depth psychology ... too."<sup>5</sup>

The case history is thus an account of significant events in a person's life recorded for a particular reason and different types of case history will be produced for example by historians, sociologists, doctors or psychotherapists. Here we are concerned only with the type of case history produced by psychologists, psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, meditation teachers, and so forth.

The psychological case history sets out to address both practical and theoretical problems. Its starting point is the compilation of information. This information will include as much detail about the person's past as is relevant. It is collected so that the therapist can make a diagnosis of the client's present state, a prognosis: "a prediction of the outcome of a particular condition, including some indication of its

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<sup>4</sup> Drever, 1964 : s.v. "case history".

<sup>5</sup> Eysinck, 1975 : s.v. "case history method".

expected duration, severity, and probably final status",<sup>6</sup> and plan a course of therapy.

The second feature of a case history is regular assessment. The evolution of the case is recorded and diagnoses and prognoses are reviewed and kept up to date. This is the therapist's means of keeping track of the changes the client is going through. Fundamental here is the therapist's expectation that during the course of the treatment the client will enter a process within which he will make progress through certain stages, and reach a defined goal. The third feature concerns generalisations that may be made after the study of a number of individual case histories. These are especially interesting as they are, in fact, ***hypothetical case histories***. They predict the stages a person will go through in his life and in his therapy. Among the most famous examples of these in contemporary psychology are Freud's oral, anal and phallic stages, Erikson's eight ages of man,<sup>7</sup> Grof's Basic Perinatal Matrices,<sup>8</sup> and Wilbur's Spectrum of Consciousness.<sup>9</sup> The second definition mentions specifically medical or clinical cases, but Grof, for example, or Wilbur, could be regarded as providing *spiritual* hypothetical case histories, i.e. hypothetical case histories concerning the evolution of the Soul or of the Self, or of the Higher Self, or of the Not-self, depending on the word one chooses to use. These spiritual hypothetical case histories are, at the same time, paths to Enlightenment, however this "Enlightenment" is defined.

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<sup>6</sup> Chaplin, 1975 : s.v. "prognosis".

<sup>7</sup> Basic Trust v. Basic Mistrust; Autonomy v. Shame and Doubt; Initiative v. Guilt; Industry v. Inferiority; Identity v. Isolation; Generativity v. Stagnation; Ego Integrity v. Despair. Erikson, 1965

<sup>8</sup> Grof 1975 : 102-103; 1985 : 103-105.

<sup>9</sup> Wilbur, 1977; 1980.

## Case histories in Buddhist psychology

Buddhist psychology presents itself as a psychology of Enlightenment.<sup>10</sup> Among the theoretical aspects of this psychology are those concerned with certain defined states of consciousness and stages of attainment, the methods that will lead to achieving them, and the obstacles that may stand in the way. Whenever soteriological methods are described, they are shown to result in psychological processes, viz., sequences of mental acts of understanding or sequences of affective states or a combination of these or the attainment of trance states (*jhāna*). Particular processes lead to defined states or stages of attainment. The texts have a large variety of ways of presenting these processes, states and stages. Several schemas of stages exist side by side. No convincing mapping of one schema to the other, however, nor any discussion of the relationships between schemas is provided. One problem with which we are faced, therefore, is that of the relationship between these various systems of stages and sequences of states and processes.

Three different types of Case histories occur in these texts: (1) case histories of Buddhas, (2) hypothetical case histories, (3) actual case histories of converts and disciples. Among the case histories of Buddhas are the standard case history for Buddhas, that of Vipassī (DN 14), and the historical Buddha's case history;<sup>11</sup> rather self-evidently the former is there to authenticate the latter. A hypothetical case history is a standard account of what the Buddha predicts will happen to somebody who follows his method. It describes the developmental process through which the serious practitioner who follows the method is likely to go. It describes how he is expected to develop in terms of cognitive and affective factors, particular experiences and insights, the acquisition of

new abilities and the attainment of the Altered States of Consciousness<sup>12</sup> whose sequential attainment is predicted upon the practice of the Buddha's method. It presents the general case, and provides the theoretical basis for a diagnosis. Most case histories come within this category. Actual case histories of converts and disciples, which unfortunately occur rather rarely, tell what happened to supposedly historical individuals through their practice of the Buddha's method. They occur most frequently in Consultations.<sup>13</sup> In these situations the progress and attainments of a given individual are diagnosed and discussed, in personal interviews with the Buddha, or by the Buddha with other monks. These personal case histories contain brief information about the practitioner's background in the form of the religious or social group to which he belongs. They provide some sort of description of his present state and problems. They contain the counselling that was offered and the progress he made using it. These case histories provide an interesting and important contrast with the ideal or hypothetical model. They illustrate the human element, the individual problems encountered by individuals trying to follow the way.

The case histories face us with particular problems. Buddhist literature, as well as attempting to be an accurate record of the Buddha's Teaching, is propaganda. It is propaganda both for the purpose of attracting new converts and for the purpose of promulgating the Buddha's Teaching.<sup>14</sup> Case histories are both demonstrations of the Buddha's method in action and proof of its efficacy. Many questions have to be asked about them. These include what purpose the individual case histories (of whatever type) serve in their contexts, and whether the different types of case history serve different purposes. Hypothetical case histories especially face us with the problem concerning the extent to

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<sup>10</sup> Manné-Lewis, 1986 : 126.

<sup>11</sup> See Bareau, 1970 for an attempt to differentiate the mythical from the historical material.

<sup>12</sup> See Tart, 1969; 1975.

<sup>13</sup> See Manné, 1990 : 61, Consultations.

<sup>14</sup> Manné, 1990 : 72-81.

which they genuinely relate to the actual experiences of any real practitioner. On the question of method, case histories show where the texts are consistent or otherwise in their presentation of the relationship between method and achievement. They confront us with the fact that there were several alternative developmental possibilities, each leading to its own particular set of achievements before arriving at the same final goal. On the question of processes of development, case histories confront us with the problem of the mutual relationship between the various sequences and stages of development. The case histories face us with particular problems but they also provide us with the means to solve them. They are presented in the texts in a highly schematised way and so they can be collected and collated, anomalies can be discerned, the problems referred to above appear in clear relief, and explanations are possible.

The *Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Samyutta* and *Anguttara Nikāyas* with the poetry of the Thera and Therigatha, are the texts, that contain the case histories. There are no case histories in the *Abhidhamma* texts except for the *Puggalapaññatti*, and very few in the *Vinaya*. Certain types of case histories occur only in certain genres of suttas. I have chosen two frequently occurring case histories for this study.

## THE SĀMAÑÑAPHALA SUTTA HYPOTHETICAL CASE HISTORY - OR HOW TO BE SURE TO WIN A DEBATE

### 1 Introduction

The *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (henceforth SPS), paragraphs 40-98, contains a hypothetical case history (henceforth HCH) a standard account of what the Buddha predicts will happen to someone who follows his

method. The formula that I call the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* hypothetical case history (henceforth abbreviated to SPS-HCH) has been much studied.<sup>15</sup> My interest in this formula is in terms of its quality as a case history and in terms of its context: it is so frequently placed within the debate situation.<sup>16</sup> The HCH which the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* contains describes a training towards, and the attainment of, a sequence of soteriological achievements, a process which begins with the attainment of faith in the Tathāgata, and which ends with the attainment of Liberation. We know that this case history is hypothetical because the subject of this case history is introduced by the phrase, "a householder, or the son of a householder, or someone who has come to be reborn in a different group",<sup>17</sup> i.e. any person who may belong to any of these (first two) groups or any other. In other words: the general case. This HCH is repeated in more or less similar form in various places in the Nikāyas<sup>18</sup>, but most strikingly in the 11 suttas that follow the SPS in the DN. Schmithausen has already remarked that it does not occur at all in the SN.<sup>19</sup> Because of its location in the Pali texts I will take *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* version as the basic version with which I will compare all of the others. This is simply a convenience, and does not imply in any way that I consider this version to be the original one.<sup>20</sup> Equally it is for convenience that I refer to this genre of hypothetical case history as the SPS-HCH.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g. Meisig (1987), who has compared the various versions of it; Griffiths (1983), who has attempted a form-critical analysis; MacQueen (1988); etc.

<sup>16</sup> See Manné, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> *gahapati vā gahapati-putto vā aññatarasmim vā kule paccājato.*

<sup>18</sup> DN, suttas 2 - 23; MN, suttas 27, 38, 51, 76, 79, 101, 112, 125; AN II 208 - 211, V 204 - 209.

<sup>19</sup> Schmithausen, 1981 : 204, fn. 15.

<sup>20</sup> The equivalent of the *Ambatṭha Sutta* takes a comparable position in the Chinese *Dirghāgama*.

## 2 The textual situations of the Case History genre SPS-HCH

The case history is presented in I.3 below in a schematised form comprising major five stages.

This case history occurs in these 12 DN suttas: the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (2), the *Ambatṭha Sutta* (3), the *Sonadanda Sutta* (4), the *Kuṭadanta Sutta* (5), the *Mahāli Sutta* (6), the *Jāliya Sutta* (7), the *Kassapa Sihanāda Sutta* (8), the *Potthapāda Sutta* (9), the *Subha Sutta* (10), the *Kevaddha Sutta* (11), the *Lohicca Sutta* (12), the *Tevijja Sutta* (13); and in 8 MN suttas: the *Cūlāhatthipadopama Sutta* (27), the *Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta* (38), the *Kandaraka Sutta* (51), the *Sandaka Sutta* (76), the *Cūlasakkaludāyī Sutta* (79), the *Devadaha Sutta* (101), the *Chabbisodhana Sutta* (112), the *Dantabhūmi Sutta* (125); and in part in AN II 208 - 211, V 204 - 209. All of the DN examples are more-or-less exact repetitions of the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* version with the exception of the *Tevijja Sutta* which introduces the *brahmavihāras*. For convenience I take the *Cūlāhatthipadopama Sutta* (27) as the basic MN sutta with which to compare all of the other MN versions. The principle difference between the DN and the MN versions is that in the MN the many similes are omitted. All of the MN examples are more-or-less exact repetitions of the *Cūlāhatthipadopama Sutta* (27), except the *Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta* (MN 38), which follows SPS-HCH up to the *jhānas*, Stage III, and then continues with a different practice or process (HCH) which leads to release through the destruction of craving, *tanhāsankhayavimutti*. AN ii 208-211 follows MN 27, the MN model sutta, but omits all of Stage IV. AN V 204-209 follows the *jhānas* with the four Āyatanas.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ākāsañāñcāyatana, viññānañcāyatana, ākiñcaññāyatana, nevasaññāñāsaññāyatana.*

## 3 The developmental schema of the SPS-HCH

I first present the developmental schema of this hypothetical case history, and then, further on in this paper, discuss the psychological process it implies.

This HCH describes a process of development through certain defined stages. I call an entire sequence of stages of development a *developmental schema*.

The DN texts tend to divide this HCH into three parts, while the MN version is briefer and there this schema is not divided into sections. Although the DN is not entirely consistent in its naming of divisions, I will respect the divisions it uses most frequently.<sup>22</sup> I will, however, divide these parts up further for ease of textual comparison, and to make the process of psychological development they describe easier to understand. Those portions that the MN basic sutta, MN 27, has in common with the basic DN sutta, DN 2, are marked with an \* in the schema below. In section I.6.2 I present the MN schema itself. All references unless otherwise specified are to the paragraphs of the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, DN 2. Terms not translated in the schema will be found translated in section 4 below.

### STAGE I The Pre-requisites, called SILA, "code of morality"

§§ 40 - 63

- \* i Hearing the Dhamma from a Tathāgata, acquiring faith, and going forth (§§ 40, 41)
- \* ii Practising the code of morality, *sīla*s (§§ 43 - 63; \* MN has only §§ 43 - 45)

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<sup>22</sup> See Rhys Davids, 1899 : 57ff; Macqueen, 1988 : 279f and Meisig, 1987 for other possibilities.

**STAGE II The cultivation of the mind**, variously named *CARANA* (DN 3), *PAÑÑĀ* (DN 4), *CITTA* (DN 8), *SAMĀDHĪ* (DN 10)

§§ 64 - 74

- \* i Guarding the door of the senses, *indriyas* (§ 64)<sup>23</sup>
- \* ii Becoming endowed with *sati* and *sampajāñña* (§ 65)
- \* iii Contentment - *santuṭṭha* (§ 66)
- \* iv Appropriate nourishment; seeking isolation (§ 67)
- \* v Abandoning the five hindrances - *nīvaranas*.  
(§§ 68 - 74,<sup>24</sup> \* MN has only § 68.<sup>25</sup>)

**STAGE III Transcending the mind**, variously included in *CARANA* (DN 3), *PAÑÑĀ* (DN 4), or *SAMĀDHĪ* (DN 10), or beginning a section called *SIKKHA* (DN I 182). §§ 75 - 82, \* MN has §§ 75, 77, 79, 81<sup>26</sup>

The *jhānas*<sup>27</sup>

- i The first *jhāna* is "accompanied by thought and reflection, born from separation, and consists of joy and bliss."<sup>28</sup>
- ii "The second *jhāna* is the result of appeasing thought and reflection; it is an inner tranquilization, a unification of the mind, free from thought and

<sup>23</sup> DN 9, I 182, may mean that this was considered a stage in itself.

<sup>24</sup> This is the chief characteristic of the *opapātika* in the Four Stages HCH, (see following chapter).

<sup>25</sup> Here and in other places, indicated below, MN consistently omits the similes that so abundantly illuminate the DN version.

<sup>26</sup> Once again omitting the similes.

<sup>27</sup> The translations are paraphrases from Bronkhurst, 1986 : 16f. Bronkhurst translated MN i 247 which I have cited. In this sutta the Buddha is speaking about his experiences. I have kept the translation impersonal.

<sup>28</sup> *sāvitakkam* *savicāram* *vivekajam* *pītisukham*.

reflection, consisting of joy and bliss born from concentration."<sup>29</sup>

- iii "The third *jhāna* is reached as a result of detachment from joy, (and through) remaining indifferent, attentive and mindful; it is the bliss experienced with the body which the noble ones describe [in these terms]: 'indifferent, with attentiveness, residing in bliss'."<sup>30</sup>
- iv The fourth *jhāna* is reached "as a result of abandoning bliss, and abandoning pain, and as a result of the earlier disappearance of cheerfulness and dejection; it is free from pain and bliss, the complete purity of equanimity and attentiveness."<sup>31</sup>

**STAGE IV Developing the transpersonal Powers**, variously named *VIJJĀ* (DN 3) or *PAÑÑĀ* (DN 4, 8, 10)

§§ 83 - 96.

The development of the following sequence of extraordinary abilities:

- i Knowing and seeing, viz. awareness of the material nature of the body (§§ 83, 84).
- ii The capacity to manifest a body through the power of mental intention (§§ 85, 86).
- iii Various *iddhis* (§§ 87, 88).
- iv Clair-audience (§§ 89, 90).

<sup>29</sup> *ajjhattam* *sampasādanam* *cetaso ekodhibhāvam* *avitakkam* *avicāram* *saṃādhijam* *pītisukham*.

<sup>30</sup> *pītiyā ca virāgā upekhako ca vihasin sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena patisamvedesim yan tam ariyā ācikkhanti: upekhako satimā sukhavihārī 'ti.*

<sup>31</sup> *sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe 'va somanassadomanassānam attthagamā adukkham asukham upekhāsatipārisuddhim.*

- v The capacity to deeply understand the heart and mind of others in a defined way (§§ 91, 92).
- \*vi Knowing the details of one's former lives (§§ \*93, 94).
- \*vii Awareness of the transmigrational future of others, including the development of the *dhamma-cakkhu* (§§ \*95, 96).

## STAGE V Liberation

§§ \*97, 98.

- \* i Knowledge of the destruction of the *āsavas*, in terms of the existence of, the rising of, the ceasing of, and the path to the cessation of both suffering (*dukkha*) and the *āsavas*.
- \* ii Knowledge that the mind is released from the *āsavas*.
- \* iii Knowing that, according to precisely defined criteria, he has succeeded, viz. *Khinā jāti vusitam brahmacariyam katam karaṇiyam nāparam itthattāya*.

## 4 The quality of the process in the developmental schema

It is easy to see that a very beautiful and alluring process is described here. An ordinary person, no-one particularly special, no-one particularly endowed in any way, hearing the Tathāgata speak, is filled with faith in him, and is inspired and converted by his message. Because of this he changes his mind about the kind of life he has been leading, which has been a domestic life. He perceives that it is limited, and not suitable for one who wants to follow a religious life. He decides to become a monk and commits himself to various practices. He lives according to the restraints of the Pātimokkha, the Vinaya rules, perfect in his practice of right behaviour and perceiving the danger in the minutest

transgression he trains, perfecting himself in the meritorious deeds of body, deed and word. He becomes completely pure in his means of livelihood and perfect in the code of morality (*sīla-sampanna*) - a very extensive and intense training for the most part in behaviour, but also in mental attitudes. He constrains his social behaviour: he refrains from taking life and using violence, stealing, and cheating. He disciplines his verbal behaviour: abstaining from false speech, deceiving others, malicious speech, the kind of gossip that stirs up trouble and disputes, coarse speech, frivolous talk, and arguments of particular types, and he cultivates truthfulness, being reliable and trustworthy, using uplifting speech, speaking at the appropriate time and with the appropriate content, namely *attha*, *dhamma*, and *vinaya*. He disciplines his eating and his dress. He gives away his property. He practises chastity. He gives up playing various games and earning a living in unsuitable ways, for example, through any sort of magic or prediction. He avoids harming any living thing, including seeds and plants.

He takes responsibility for the contents of his mind by cultivating certain mental attitudes: modesty, compassion towards all beings, and positive thinking, in the form of cultivating confidence that he will get the supplies of robes and almsfood that he needs. He is watchful over the doors of his sense faculties (*indriyas*). Thus he prevents covetousness and dejection (*abhijjhā-domannassa*) and other evil and unprofitable (mental) states from overcoming him. He makes himself perfect in awareness over mind and body (*sati, sampajañña*). He attains a state of contentment (*santuṭṭha*). At this point he seeks isolation. He finds a solitary place, adopts the appropriate body posture (by sitting cross-legged with his body erect) and begins his mental practice. Taking mindfulness (*sati*) as his object he sets about purifying his mind by expelling certain tendencies and thought-patterns and replacing them with others. He purifies his mind of covetousness for the world (*abhijjhā*

*loke*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), inflexibility (*thīna*)<sup>32</sup> and torpor (*middha*), agitation (*uddhacca*) and regret (*kukkucca*),<sup>33</sup> and doubt (*vicikiccha*).<sup>34</sup>

At the end of this process, "when he perceives that he has abandoned the five hindrances, delight arises in him, and joy at that delight, and his body calms down through consciousness of that joy, and his calm body feels happy, and the mind of one who is happy is concentrated." From this state he enters the *jhānas*: he experiences the first *jhāna*, "which is accompanied by thought and reflection, born from separation, and consists of joy and bliss"; the second *jhāna*, "which is an inner tranquilization, a unification of the mind, free from thought and recollection, consisting of joy and bliss that is born from concentration"; the third *jhāna*, which is attained through detachment from joy, attentiveness and mindfulness, and in which is experienced the bliss which the noble ones describe as "indifference, with attentiveness, residing in bliss"; the fourth *jhāna*, which is attained "as a result of abandoning bliss, and abandoning pain, [and] as the result of the earlier disappearance of cheerfulness and dejection, [and] which is free from pain and bliss, the complete purity of equanimity and attentiveness."<sup>35</sup>

His mind (*citta*) is now in a particular condition. It is composed, cleansed, pure, free from blemish and without defilement. It is malleable, workable, steadfast, and imperturbable. At this point he cultivates transcendent insights and powers. He applies his mind to knowing and seeing (*nānādassana*) and thereby he recognises that his body is material (*rūpin*), is composed of the four great elements, comes about through

<sup>32</sup> Frauwallner, 1953 : 166, "Starrheid".

<sup>33</sup> "Reue", Frauwallner, 1953 : 167.

<sup>34</sup> This is the accomplishment of the cultivation of the mind, or Stage II, DN 2, paras 64 - 74.

<sup>35</sup> The translations of the descriptions of the *jhānas* are taken from Bronkhorst, 1986 : 16f but are somewhat freely adapted to fit in with this account of the case history. This is the accomplishment of the transcending of the mind, or Stage III, DN 2, paras 75 - 82.

mother and father, grows/is maintained by boiled rice and sour milk, and that its nature, on account of erosion, abrasion, dissolution and disintegration, is impermanent, and that his consciousness is dependent upon and bound to it. He applies his mind further, to producing a body made through the power of his mind (*manomayam kāyam*). He applies his mind to the modes of psychic power (*iddhi*): he multiplies himself, and re-becomes one; he transplaces himself, physical objects being no obstacle; he passes through the earth, and over the water, he goes through the air; he touches the moon and the sun with his hand; he transports his body to the Brahma world. He applies his mind to clair-audience, hearing both the sounds of gods and of men. He applies his mind to the knowledge that understands the minds of other beings and of other men, so that he recognises in them the presence or absence of passion,<sup>36</sup> blemishes, delusion, attentive or distracted, greatness or littleness, inferiority or peerlessness; concentration or dissipation, and whether the mind is released or otherwise. He applies his mind to the detailed knowledge of his former existences including his pleasant and unpleasant experiences. He acquires clairvoyance, and applies his mind to the knowledge of the decease and rebirth of other beings, recognising in them as they transmigrate according to their deeds whether they are base or of good quality, well or ill-favoured, or in a good or unpleasant reincarnation. He recognises those beings who indulged in mispractices in body, speech and mind, who spoke against noble people, who held wrong views and attracted the karma and rebirth associated with this. He recognises those beings who practised correctly in body, speech and mind, who did not speak against the enlightened ones, who held right views and attracted the karma and rebirth associated with this.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See Johannson 1969 and 1979 for some discussion of the terms used here.

<sup>37</sup> This is the accomplishment of the development of the transpersonal powers or Stage IV, DN 2, paras 40 - 62.

He applies his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the intoxicants (*āsavas*). He recognises correctly Suffering, the arising of Suffering, the cessation of Suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of Suffering. He recognises correctly, "these are the intoxicants, this is the arising of the intoxicants, this is the cessation of the intoxicants, this is the path to the cessation of the intoxicants". He attains the knowledge, that his mind is released from the intoxicant of desire (*kāmāsava*), from the intoxicant of becoming (*bhavāsava*), and from the intoxicant of ignorance (*avijjāsava*). He knows that he has attained liberation.<sup>38</sup>

It's inspirational, isn't it? The whole process is made to sound so easy and so simple. The mental states on offer are so highly desirable, and there is no mention of any problems on the way.

## 5 The function of the SPS-HCH in the texts

The hypothetical case history is the coup de grâce, the pièce de résistance, the final word which, somewhat adapted in one way or another to suit the exigencies of the situation, forms the core element in the Buddha's answer to the challenges made by his opponents in the DN dramatic debate suttas DN 2 - 13.<sup>39</sup> In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (DN 2) it describes the fruit of the life of a *samāna*. In the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN 5) it is used to describe the highest sacrifice of all (§ 27). In the *Mahāli Sutta* and the *Jāliya Suttas* (DN 6 & 7) it is used to demonstrate that like the Buddha himself, a bhikkhu who had followed this path and achieved the attainments of Stages III - V would not be concerned with views regarding the relationship between soul (*jīva*) and body (*sarīra*). In the *Kevaddha Sutta* (DN 11) it is the marvel of instruction. In the *Lohicca Sutta* (DN 12) it is the teaching of the teacher who is beyond reproach.

<sup>38</sup> Stage V.

<sup>39</sup> See Manné, 1990.

The SPS-HCH is subdivided or subcategorised according to convenience in order to provide the answer to the challenges of these Debate Suttas. Discussing every instance would serve no purpose, so I will illustrate this exploitation of the SPS-HCH with just two DN examples, the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* (3) and the *Sonadanda Sutta* (4). Further examples will occur in the ensuing discussion. In the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* Stages I - III are taught as *carana* and Stages IV and V as *vijā* in order to explain to Ambaṭṭha a verse uttered by the Buddha. The origin of this verse is unknown but we may believe it to be brahmanical as the text attributes it to Brahmā Kumāra, the Buddha quotes it while debating with a brahman youth and one part of his line of attack in this debate is to prove that he knows more than either the brahmans or their teachers do about their own religion. This verse claims that it is conduct (*carana*) and wisdom (*vijā*) that make a man best among gods and men, which accounts for these divisions in this sutta. In the *Sonadanda Sutta*, Stages I and II are taught as *sīla* and Stages III - V as *paññā*, in order to explain the practical meaning of these terms to the brahmans who do not understand their import but know only that these are the essential qualities that make a man a brahman.

Where in the DN the use of this HCH is strictly limited to the dramatic (live) debate situation, in the MN, although this HCH serves the same purpose, i.e. that of winning the debate, the texts are freer in the way they use it. In the *Cūlāhatthipadoma Sutta* (MN 27), where it is uttered to complete a simile that compares the four "footprints" of the Buddha to those of an elephant, and thus to bring to a conclusion a debate between the Buddha and Jāṇussoṇi, a brahman, it is the recital of this HCH that brings Jāṇussoṇi to concede defeat.<sup>40</sup> In the *Mahātañhāsaṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 38) this HCH is used in part (up to the five hindrances) when a foolish monk is drilled in the Teaching.<sup>41</sup> In the

<sup>40</sup> See Manné, 1990.

<sup>41</sup> A different HCH, i.e. not the SPS-HCH, follows at this point.

*Kandaraka Sutta* (MN 51) it is used to designate a certain character type: the implied debate situation here is that the other types described follow other religious practices (or wrong professions), ascetical or brahman, i.e. they are hypothetical opponents.<sup>42</sup> In the *Sandaka Sutta* (MN 76), Ananda, having won a debate with a group of wanderers through different arguments, and having forced his opponent to question him,<sup>43</sup> uses it to describe what the Buddha teaches. In the *Cūla-Sakaludāyi Sutta* it is used to explain why the monks follow the Buddha Teaching. In the *Devadaha Sutta* (MN 101), where it occurs within a reported debate between the Buddha and some Jains, this HCH is the way the Buddha concludes his answer to the Jain position on pain. In the *Chabbisodhana Sutta* (MN 112) the Buddha proclaims that when a monk answers with this HCH, applying it to his own personal process, then his claim to profound knowledge (*aññā*) can be accepted; this may be an attempt by redactors to authenticate this HCH as a process of development. In the *Dantabhūmi Sutta* (MN 125) the Buddha informs a monk who had had no success in a debate with prince Jayasena that this HCH would have been the answer with which to defeat the prince.

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<sup>42</sup> See Manné, 1990.

<sup>43</sup> See Witzel, 1987.

## 6 The authenticity of the SPS-HCH as a case history<sup>44</sup>

### 6.1 The question of authenticity

#### *Authenticity and buddhavacana*

The first problem to be dealt with on the issue of authenticity is whether we may justifiably believe that the Buddha actually uttered the utterances attributed to him in the texts. What we may justifiably believe depends on evidence. It seems a good idea to say that there is no evidence that could prove that the Buddha ever spoke a word among all of those attributed to him by any text whatever.<sup>45</sup> What we can do is examine the texts on their individual merits and make judgements on the plausibility of their contexts. We can, I think, believe on the evidence that the Buddha engaged in debate with other religious leaders: the texts contain so much information on this subject that it is hard to believe that it is all pure invention, and moreover, there is great consistency of details between the Buddhist and the Vedic tradition.<sup>46</sup> We can, I think, also trust the reciters

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<sup>44</sup> The authenticity of various parts of this HCH have been discussed by both Schmithausen (1981) and Bronkhorst (1986, Chapter VII). Schmithausen has also paid attention to its plausibility as a psychological process, although I am not sure we know enough about psychological processes to make such a judgment. See, e.g. Grof, Wilbur, Tart, etc. for evidence of some rather interesting psychological processes.

<sup>45</sup> "...no text known can be considered contemporaneous with the Buddha. On the contrary, it is well known that all Buddhist texts, as they are read today, are not only heavily influenced by linguistic developments known to be much later than the early days of Buddhism, but also reformulated perhaps, and certainly recast from one language into another before they reached their present linguistic shape." Von Hinüber, 1991.

<sup>46</sup> See Manné, 1990 & 1992.

sufficiently in this case, because it is relatively free of anomalies,<sup>47</sup> and believe that if this passage was not the Buddha's way of winning a debate, then something like it which has suffered changes over time served this purpose.

#### **Authenticity and Case Histories**

By the term "authenticity" in the context of case histories, I mean whether we may be convinced that any monk, or the Buddha himself, experienced a particular sequence of developmental stages, through the practice of the Buddha's method.

#### **6.2 The authenticity of the individual stages.**

Let us consider the ingredients of this case history, considering the authenticity of each of the stages in turn.

##### **Stage I**

The authenticity of the elements of Stage I, the *sīlas* poses no problem. In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (S.1) of the DN the Buddha describes Stage I, the *sīlas*,<sup>48</sup> designating the virtues that they contain as those that any ordinary man (*puthujjana*) is capable of appreciating.<sup>49</sup> This indicates that even the least and most minor religious leader was be expected to adhere to this moral code, and that they were, therefore, common to all liberation-oriented religions or spiritual paths of the time.

<sup>47</sup> Unlike the example of the concept of the "lion's roar". See Manné, 1992 : 121, fn.14 and forthcoming.

<sup>48</sup> Paras. 40 - 62 here, = paras. 8 - 27 of the *Brahmajāla Sutta*.

<sup>49</sup> *Idam kho tam bhikkhave appamattakam oramattakam silamattakam yena puthujjano Tathāgatassa vannam vadamāno vadeyya.* DN I 12. "These, brethren, are the trifling matters, the minor details, of mere morality, of which the unconverted man, when praising the Tathāgata, might speak." Tr. T.W. Rhys Davids, DB i 28.

##### **Stage II**

Here we find miscellaneous elements. I do not know how to evaluate their likely authenticity. Developing the *indriyas* is a requirement for the attainment of *opapātika* while abandoning the five hindrances is the criteria for *anāgāmi*. Both of these stages form part of the second case history which is the subject of the following article, 'Case Histories from the Pali Canon II: The Four Stages (*sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmin*, *anāgamin*, *arahat*) case history - spiritual materialism and the need for tangible results.'

##### **Stages III and V**

The authenticity and originality of the *jhānas*, which fall into Stage III of the schema I have proposed for this HCH, and the destruction of the intoxicants (*āsavas*), Stage V, have been firmly established by Bronkhorst, as has the practice of mindfulness (*sati*), Stage II, ii here.<sup>50</sup> The authenticity of an individual element in this HCH, however, is not sufficient to prove the authenticity of the whole as a genuine process of development.

##### **Stage IV**

This is the stage of developing the transpersonal or paranormal powers. About these I quote at length from Lee Siegel's timely book, *Net of Magic : Wonders and Deceptions in India*,

"The confusion, Indian as well as European, of magician-entertainers with magician-yogis was natural and intentionally precipitated. Street performers earned their livelihood by capitalizing on the association, by imitating or

<sup>50</sup> Bronkhorst, 1986 : 88f.

impersonating those mendicant ascetics who, for over two thousand years in India, having renounced their domestic and social roles and having severed all attachements to the world to wander here and there in a penance for their birth, have been supported with the alms of pious members of society wanting, through their offerings, to have some redemptive share in the vagbond renouncer's holiness. Through ascetic practices, wandering sannyasis were (and are) believed to attain supernatural powers, the powers of Shiva, *siddhis*, which, like every other aspect of life and death in India, have been systematically catalogued and normatively categorized: *animan* (the power to become minute or, for the magician, disappearance) and *mahiman* (the power to become large); *laghiman* (the ability to become light, to levitate) and *gariman* (the power to become heavy); *prāpti* (the skill of abtaining things, effecting materializations, or, as explained by the traditional commentators on the *Yogaśūtras* of Patañjali [3.45], having the ability to touch the moon with one's fingertip); *prākāmya* (the power to will things so - telekinesis); *īśīvra* (a power over the will of others - hypnosis) and *vaśīvra* (a power to subdue one's own will - self-hypnosis). Demonstrations of any of these skills are proof of holy perfection and perfect holiness. The Buddha, that son of Maya, Queen Magic, is frequently referred to and depicted as a magician, a *māyāvin*: [here Siegel quotes Stage IV, iii.] ...

"I've seen versions of the same tricks performed by entertainers.

..."

"The magical potencies of the Buddha, *abhiññas* and *Rddhis* - telepathy and telekinesis, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and clairsentience - were, it was postulated, acquired or realized in advanced meditation. ...

"Because there was money to be made, alms for ascetics and offerings for incarnate gods, money given in exchange for a participation in the holiness that supernatural feats were thought to express or represent, every street magician had a version of the *siddhis*, *Rddhis* and *abhiññas*. As the wandering holy man seemed to be a magician, so the wondering magician seemed to be a holy man. And there was (and is) power, cash or esteem, in holiness."<sup>51</sup>

I think this says eloquently and adequately what there is to be said about the attainments that belong to this stage.

In order to win the debate, the Teaching had to be shown to contain everything: moral discipline (Stage I), mental discipline (Stage II, i - iii), ascetic practice (Stage II, iv), altered states of consciousness in the form of trance states (Stage III), transpersonal and magical powers (Stage IV), as well as the Liberation which was its goal (Stage V).

### 6.3 The DN Version

The DN suttas are very keen to prove the authenticity of this HCH, which is hardly surprising. They put it into Ānanda's mouth in DN 10, where he teaches it as "the three factors the Buddha used to praise, which he would use to arouse the people, *to bring them into his teaching and to establish them there*: the noble factor of *sīla*, the noble factor of *saṃādhi* and the noble factor of *paññā*".<sup>52</sup> This sutta contains so few of the features of the other debates that it is mainly classifiable as a "debate sutta" because it contains this HCH and because of its location in this

<sup>51</sup> Siegel, 1991 : 150f.

<sup>52</sup> *Tinnam kho mānavā khandhānam so Bhagavā vanna-vādī ahosi, ettha ca imam janatām samādapesi nivesesi patiṭṭhāpesi. .. Ariyassa silakkhandhassa, ariyassa samādhikkhandhassa, ariyassa paññākkhandhassa.* (§ 6).

Nikāya. It is evidence that at some stage the Dīgha *bhānakas* needed to put Ānanda's authority behind their version of this account.

In spite of this attempt, many factors point against any attribution of authenticity to this HCH as an genuine case history and path to Enlightenment. One of these is the flexibility with which it is divided and adapted. Some examples were given above (the *Ambatṭha* and the *Sonadanda suttas*, DN 3 and 4). There are, however, cases in the DN where this HCH is adapted with rather more serious implications regarding the Buddha's Teaching. One of these occurs in the *Potthapāda Sutta* (DN 9): the Buddha is challenged to explain how the cessation of consciousness, *abhisaññā-nirodha*, comes about. He replies by means of the HCH Stages I and II. Then he teaches the stages (*āyatanas*) where "space is infinite" (*ākāsaññañca*), "knowledge is infinite" (*vijñānaññañca*), "there is nothing" (*ākiñcañña*) and "there is neither ideation nor non-ideation" (*nevasaññāñāsaññā*), known collectively as the four *arūpas*, which are an unusual interpolation in this context, and further he teaches that the process culminates in cessation (*so nirodham phusati*), which is also unusual. Bronkhorst has brought forward convincing evidence that points to a time when these stages were not accepted by at least some Buddhists<sup>53</sup> and considers that they do not form a part of original Buddhism.<sup>54</sup> Another instance where the HCH is adapted with rather serious implications occurs in the *Tevijja Sutta* (DN 13), where, rather suddenly, the qualities of mind *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekhā*, known collectively as the *brahmavihāras*, appear as elements in the HCH, and the bhikkhu pervades the world with these (paras. 76 - 79). These too Bronkhorst has shown to be neither uniquely nor originally Buddhist.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the "pe's", or shorthand signals in the text that

portions are to be repeated<sup>56</sup> in this sutta make it uncertain whether the HCH in its entirety is included in the Buddha's treatment of the path to companionship with Brahmā (*brahmānam sahavyatāya magga*) and supplemented by the *brahmavihāras*, or whether Stages III is omitted and substituted by them.<sup>57</sup>

#### 6.4 The MN Version

The MN has its own version of this HCH which is much simpler than the DN version. The schema is worth presenting separately.

##### The MN Schema<sup>58</sup>

###### STAGE I The Pre-requisites

- i Hearing the Dhamma from a Tathāgata, acquiring faith, and going forth ( §§ 40, 41)
- ii Practising the code of morality, *sīlas* (MN has only §§ 43 - 45)

###### STAGE II The cultivation of the mind

- i Guarding the door of the senses, *indriyas* (§ 64)
- ii Becoming endowed with *sati* and *sampajāñña* (§ 65)
- iii Contentment - *santuṣṭha* (§ 66)
- iv Appropriate nourishment; seeking isolation (§ 67)
- v Abandoning the five hindrances - *nīvaranas* (§ 68)

<sup>53</sup> Bronkhorst, 1986 : 82.

<sup>54</sup> See Bronkhorst, 1986 : 86.

<sup>55</sup> Bronkhorst, 1986 : 87f

<sup>56</sup> PTSD, s.v. *peyyāla*, "On syllable *pe* Trenckner, Notes 66, says: 'The sign of abridgement, *pe* ..., means *peyyāla* which is not an imperative 'insert, fill up the gap,' but a substantive *peyyālo* or *peyyālam*, signifying a phrase to be repeated over & over again."

<sup>57</sup> DN I 250, fn. 5.

<sup>58</sup> The paragraph numbers are those from the DN version.

### STAGE III Transcending the mind

The *jhānas* (§§ 75, 77, 79, 81)

### STAGE IV Developing the transpersonal Powers

- vi Knowing the details of one's former lives (§§ 93)
- vii Awareness of the transmigrational future of others, including the development of the *dhamma-cakkhu* (§§ 95)

### STAGE V Liberation, § 97

- i Knowledge of the destruction of the *āsavas*, in terms of the existence of, the rising of, the ceasing of, and the path to the cessation of both suffering (*dukkha*) and the *āsavas*
- ii Knowledge that the mind is released from the *āsavas*
- iii Knowing that, according to precisely defined criteria, he has succeeded, viz. *Khīnā jāti vusitam brahmacariyam katam karanīyam nāparam itthattāya*

The MN version lacks most of the paranormal or transpersonal powers that are so important in Stage IV of the DN version. Those that remain occur also among the Ten Powers of the Tathāgata<sup>59</sup> and within Sāriputta'a lion's roar.<sup>60</sup> With regard to (vi), knowing the details of one's past lives, past life work forms an increasing part of the modern therapeutic experience in the work of therapists of different theoretical

allegiances:<sup>61</sup> knowing something about one's former lives seems to be useful for solving problems in the present life. This section of the MN is more plausible than the same section of the DN version.

The *Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta* (MN 38) makes a particular adaptation. It follows SPS-HCH up to the *jhānas*, Stage III, and then continues with a different process (HCH): release through the destruction of craving, *tanhāsankhayavimutti*. This process comprises a certain relationship to the products of the workings of the six senses: the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. The relationship is identical with regard to each of these senses. It is:

"When he has seen a material shape through the eye, [heard a sound through the ear, smelt a scent with the nose, savoured a taste with the tongue, felt a touch with the body, known a mental object with the mind] he does not feel attraction for agreeable material shapes, [sounds, etc.], he does not feel repugnance for disagreeable material shapes [sounds, etc.]; and he dwells with mindfulness aroused as to the body, with a mind that is immeasurable; and he comprehends that freedom of mind and that freedom through intuitive wisdom as they really are, whereby those evil unskilled states of his are stopped without remainder. He who has thus got rid of compliance and antipathy, whatever feeling he feels – pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant -- he does not delight in that feeling, does not welcome it or persist in cleaving to it From not delighting in that feeling of his, from not welcoming it, from not

<sup>59</sup> Manné (forthcoming), quote (8), (viii) and (ix).

<sup>60</sup> Manné (forthcoming), quote (14), (xvi) and (xvii).

<sup>61</sup> Moody, 1976; Netherton and Shiffrin, 1978; Woolger, 1988. Moody is a psychiatrist. Netherton is a psychologist. Woolger is a Jungian analyst. The literature on this subject is much wider than the three books cited. I have chosen these because they are among the classics on this subject.

persisting in cleaving to it, whatever was delight in those feelings is stopped. From the stopping of his delight is the stopping of grasping; from the stopping of grasping is the stopping of becoming; from the stopping of becoming is the stopping of birth; from the stopping of birth, old age and dying, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair are stopped. Such is the stopping of this entire mass of anguish.<sup>62</sup>

These examples could be taken to show that the *jhānas* were a stepping stone for entry into various other altered states of consciousness. The two DN suttas that make adaptations are debates. The *Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta* (MN 38), however, is a consultation.<sup>63</sup> I have argued<sup>64</sup> that whereas debates are exercises in publicity and opportunities for propaganda, consultations show the problems that arose and how they were dealt with and resolved. Consultations, therefore, may be more reliable as historical documents and may show aspects of the Teaching developing spontaneously in response to particular problems. Bronkhorst, while showing that the four *arūpas* and the *brahmavihāras* did not form a part of original Buddhism, showed at the same time that

<sup>62</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS I 323f. *So cakkhunā rūpañ disvā piyariupe rūpe na sārajjati, appiyariupe rupe na byāpajjati, upaṭṭhitakāyasati ca viharati appamāṇacetaso, tañ-ca cetovimuttim paññāvimuttim yathābhūtam pajānāti yath'assa te pāpākā akusalā dhammā aparisesā nirujjhanti. So evam anurodhavirodhangippahīno yam kañci vedanam vedeti, sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā, so tam vedanam nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiñhati. Tassa tam vedanam anabhinandato anabhivadato anajjhosāya tiñhato yā vedanānāsu nandī sā nirujjhati, tassa nandīnirodhā upādānanirodho, upādānanirodha bhavanirodho, bhavanirodha jātinirodho, jātinirodha jarāmaranam sokaparidevadukkhamanussupāyāsā nirujjhanti, evam - etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.* MN I 270.

<sup>63</sup> See Manné, 1990 : 3.

<sup>64</sup> Manné, 1990, 3.

they came in to Buddhism rather early as influences from the Jains.<sup>65</sup> Under these circumstances it is possible that the attainment of the capacity to enter at will into the *jhānas* also gave access to various other altered states of consciousness, as one might indeed expect from the highly developed skill in meditation that this ability must imply.

In any case, these examples show that the SPS-HCH was a flexible vehicle for winning an argument.

## 6.5 Authenticity of Function

As I said above (section 5), the function of this HCH in the DN was certainly to win victory for the Buddha in debate. The texts themselves give further clues: this Hypothetical Case History is the standard utterance "which the Buddha used to arouse the people, to bring them into his teaching and to establish them there".<sup>66</sup> The process that these texts describe is - and is intended to be - inspirational. There is no mention of hardship, no insinuation of the difficulties lying ahead, no allusion to the problems involved. Success is implied in commencing the Path. The attainment of its end, Liberation, is presented as inevitable. There are other Case Histories which address the problems that come up in understanding or in practising the Buddha's method. This one is clearly propaganda.<sup>67</sup> It is the advertisement for the

<sup>65</sup> Bronkhorst, 1986 : 88.

<sup>66</sup> DN 10, see above.

<sup>67</sup> See also Macqueen, "The .. set of attainments [i.e. the HCH] is in the texts not merely listed but given in considerable detail with the use of striking similes. Great effort seems to have been spent in making even the most tortuous paths of spiritual training appear attractive to the common man having little experience of them, by appealing to the desire for self-control, peace and joy, purity and freedom, as well as to the longing to perceive and partake of realms of existence normally closed to people. One naturally assumes that the document is therefore

(Continues...)

Buddha's method and its results, and a means for final victory in debate. It contains everything: the existence of a fabulous being (the Tathāgata); morality (Stage I); mental discipline and spiritual progress (Stage II); trance states (Stage III); paranormal abilities and magical powers (Stage IV); transcendental attainment (Stage V). It contains everything, therefore it contains something for everybody, as witnessed in its efficacy to convert brahmans, wanderers, ascetics, kings, householders; in fact all the groups of people with whom the Buddha came into contact. Was the Buddha then cynical, offering magic and non-Buddhist states as part of his message just to convert followers? I think not. He knew his Teaching was hard to grasp and subtle.<sup>68</sup> Few were the people who would comprehend it: the debates themselves offer only two examples of people who were converted through this HCH and went on to attain Arahatship.<sup>69</sup> But many more were the people who could benefit at least a

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intended to attract people from the household to the homeless life, to make monks out of laymen." 1988 : 280.

<sup>68</sup> *adhigato kho me ayam dhammo gambhiro duddaso duranubodho santo panito atakkavacaro nipuno panitavedaniyo.* MN i 167. "This dhamma, won to by me is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, tranquil, excellent, beyond dialectic, subtle, intelligible to the learned." Horner, MLS i 211.

<sup>69</sup> Kassapa, the ascetic, in DN 8, and Citta Hatthisari-putto in DN 9. There are, however, some problematic expressions:

(1) In DN 3 [I 110] it is said of Pokkharasādi, "And then the brahman Pokkharasādi, as one who had seen the Truth, had mastered it, understood it, dived deep down into it, who had passed beyond doubt and put away perplexity and gained full confidence, who had become dependent on no other man for his knowledge of the teaching of the Master .. ." (Tr. Rhys Davids, DB I 135.) *dīṭṭha-dhammo patta-dhammo vidita-dhammo pariyogālha-dhammo tiṇṇa-vicikiccho vigata-kathampatho vesārajjappatto aparapaccayo satthu sāsane...* The same expression is used about Kūṭadanta in DN 5 [I 148] This is a description of a state of attainment and certainly sounds rather impressive. But what level of attainment does it correspond to? I do not know.

(2) DN 5 precedes this expression with "And just as a clean cloth, with all stains in it washed away, will readily take the dye, just even so did Kūṭadanta the Brahman, even while seated there, obtain the pure and spotless Eye for the Truth,

(Continues...)

little from practising his method. Once the Buddha had decided to teach, it was also his responsibility to reach as many people as possible, his challenge also in terms of the time he lived in and the debate tradition.

Perhaps this case history can be regarded in a different way. Griffiths says of it, "We may regard [it to be] a text on meditation not as an encapsulation of the experience to which it points, but as simultaneously a blue-print for such experience - a spiritual technology - and a reflection upon it. .. the meditation text is that by which experience both becomes possible for and relevant to the practitioner, and that which mediates the experience so that it may become efficacious for others. Meditation texts then appear as a kind of pictorial, symbolic, conceptual and imagistic representation by means of which men may approach varieties of transcendent experience,"<sup>70</sup> i.e., they are texts to inspire, but not to take literally.<sup>71</sup>

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and he knew: 'Whatsoever has a beginning, in that is inherent also the necessity of dissolution.'" (Tr. Rhys Davids, DB I 184.) *seyyathā pi nāma suddham vattham apagata-kālakām samad eva rajaṇam patiganheyya, evam eva Kūṭadantassa brāhmaṇassā tasmim yeva āsane virajam vīta-malam dhamma-cakkhum udapādi: yam kiñci samudaya-dhammam sabban tam nirodha-dhamman ti.* Of this experience of gaining the "Dhamma-Eye", Harvey says "This experience is technically known as stream-entry .. ." (Harvey, 1990 : 23. See also Lamotte, 1984 :53. Lamotte later qualifies this as being scholastic terminology, p.54. Malasekera in the DPPN, s.v. Aññāta-Koñḍañña, assumes this as well.) Harvey cites no evidence for this claim, and I know of no evidence for it in the DN, MN, SN or AN. I have not seen the two equated in any passage in the Pali texts. I think therefore that he is mistaken. The attainment of the "Dhamma-Eye" is the first recorded attainment after the Buddha preached his first sermon, and there is no mention at all of "stream-entry" in this sermon (SN V 420-424). The Sutta version of this event in the SN stops at Kodañña's attainment of the Dhamma-Eye. The Vinaya version is longer and concludes by saying that each of the five first disciples attained Liberation (*anupādāya āsavehi cittāni vimuccitīnsu*).

<sup>70</sup> Griffiths, 1983 : 7-8. Griffiths bases himself on Oberhammer's view of yogic meditation. (Oberhammer, 1977.)

<sup>71</sup> But see Sharf, forthcoming.

The purpose of this passage was to win the debate. To do this, the "knowledge" it contained had to be more inspiring than that offered by the opponent. Hence it had to contain something for everybody, and it does. But this is not the whole story. I think that Griffith's view contributes to explain the capacity of this passage to win debates while it does not quite confirm to Griffith's definition of the meditational texts - some of its contents being spurious - it shares with them the capacity to inspire.<sup>72</sup>

## 7 Further Textual Problems

### 7.1 Why the MN and the DN versions differ

Schmithausen has already suggested that different *bhāṇakas* had different versions of teachings.<sup>72</sup> I agree with him about this. I wish further to propose that the reason the DN has the embellished version, while the MN has a simpler one can be accounted for by the difference in functions of these two texts. I have argued<sup>73</sup> that the DN "derives from an original, probably spontaneously created, collection of publicity material for the early Buddhists, while the .. MN (is) the collection which arose to serve their need to introduce new converts to the character of the leader, the Buddha, and the important disciples, to integrate the new converts into their values and their way of life, and to provide them with the fundamentals of the Teaching and the Practice." To serve its purpose, therefore the DN needs an embellished version, to provide entertainment, to capture the imagination, to attract support and converts; the MN has no need for the embellishments: it is for those who have already been converted. Hence its version of this HCH is less embellished.

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<sup>72</sup> Schmithausen, 1981 : 204, fn 15.

<sup>73</sup> Manné, 1990 : 4.3.

### 7.2 Why the SPS-HCH occurs primarily in dramatic debates

In the DN the SPS-HCH occurs only in dramatic debates and never in reported debates or debates with hypothetical opponents. In the MN it occurs in various types of debates in six of the eight suttas in which it is found.

A key feature of the brahman debates is forcing the opponent to ask questions. With regard to the person being questioned, "mere brazen assertion does not suffice: one must be able to prove one's knowledge".<sup>74</sup> Perhaps we must believe that this HCH was genuinely important in debates of a certain period, although we cannot presume that it had its present form from the very earliest times.<sup>75</sup> The Digha *bhāṇakas*, then, are using it in an authentic setting. If I am right about the purposes of the DN and the MN, then probably the DN *bhāṇakas* had more contact with brahman society and were more familiar with its customs. Statistics regarding the target groups of these two Nikāyas tend to support this. 29.41% (10 out of 34) of DN suttas are directed towards brahmans,<sup>76</sup> while only 14.47% (22 out of 152) of MN suttas<sup>77</sup> are similarly directed.

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<sup>74</sup> See Witzel, 1987 : 373.

<sup>75</sup> See Pande, 1974 : 85ff.

<sup>76</sup> Suttas no. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 23, 27.

<sup>77</sup> Suttas no. 4, 7, 27, 30, 41, 42, 82, 85, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 107, 108, 135, 150, 152.

## In Conclusion

Many of the suttas of the Pāli canon are like novels, or at least like short stories. They are source books for psychologists and contain case histories. The serious study of these case histories can further our understanding of the history and the development of Buddhism as I have shown here, and as I show in the following case history.

La Conversion

Joy Manné

## CASE HISTORIES FROM THE PĀLI CANON II:<sup>1</sup>

### *SOTĀPANNA, SAKADĀGĀMIN, ANĀGĀMIN, ARAHAT – THE FOUR STAGES CASE HISTORY OR SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM AND THE NEED FOR TANGIBLE RESULTS*

Robert H. Sharf has argued in a recent article called *Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience* that "while some adepts may indeed experience "altered States" in the course of their training, critical analysis shows that such states do not constitute the reference points for the elaborate Buddhist discourse pertaining to the "path". Rather, such discourse turns out to function ideologically and performatively -- wielded more often than not in the interests of legitimization and institutional authority."<sup>2</sup> In Section VI of his article Sharf is concerned with the contemporary rivalry between teachers of *samatha* and *vipassanā* and with their disputes between whether attainments are to be defined as *jhāna* or *sotāpanna*.<sup>3</sup> Sharf says, "private episodes [i.e. as

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<sup>2</sup> Numen, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Sharf, (forthcoming): section VI.

potentially transformative experiences do not constitute the reference points for the elaborate discourse on meditative states found in Buddhist scholastic sources. In other words, terms such *samatha*, *vipassanā*, *sotāpanna* and *satori* are not rendered sensible by virtue of the fact that they refer to clearly delimited "experiences" shared by Buddhist practitioners. Rather, the meaning of such terminology must be sought in the polemic and ideological context in which Buddhist meditation is carried out.<sup>4</sup> A study of one of the most famous case histories in the Pāli Canon will show that this has always been the case and will force us to further lose some illusions.

Buddhist case histories are treated in two quite opposite ways. Scholars treat them in one way, and contemporary meditation teachers and teachers of Buddhism treat them in another. Often the great scholars treat the case histories in a summary manner, pronouncing verdicts upon them which rest more upon the scholar's authority than upon the hard work of providing the proof demanded by an interested and enquiring colleague. A lineage of scholars then simply believes and quotes these authorities, but, once again, no evidence is brought forward. The modern monks and lay teachers of Buddhism and meditation, too, do not question these case histories, but take them for granted as representing a true description of the results of meditation at the time of the Buddha, and therefore of the potential results of meditation for the modern practitioner today. A detailed study of these case histories provides a mine of interesting and surprising information and forces us to separate from our projections and fantasies about the contents of the texts and the results of the practice of meditation.

## THE FOUR STAGES HYPOTHETICAL CASE HISTORY

### - SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM AND THE NEED FOR TANGIBLE RESULTS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

There are two suttas, the *Cūlasihanāda Sutta* of the MN (11) and AN II 238, §239, that permit the monks to roar a lion's roar on the subject of the existence of the four types of *saṃṭana* in the Buddha's Teaching: the *sotāpanna* "the Stream Enterer", the *sakadāgāmin* "the Once-Returner", the *opapātika*<sup>4</sup> "the Non-Returner" and the Arahant. From the AN sutta we know that these terms designate sequential stages of development, i.e. that the sequence of types of *saṃṭana* forms a HCH. Although these suttas have the assertion about *saṃṭanas* in common, they differ completely with regard to content and especially, neither of them provide either the defence of this aspect of the training or the support for it that the debate situation would require.<sup>5</sup> How are we to explain this anomaly? The answer is that it is unlikely that this HCH has an authentic connection with the debate tradition, but rather that it was imposed upon it in the course of the development of the religion. The following long analysis of the appearances of these stages in the four Nikāyas will show that the religion required this HCH on many grounds. First the lists of stages and their elaborations (§2) will be presented. Then what the texts say about the individual stages is examined where there is enough evidence to do so (§3). This information is then reviewed and discussed (§4). A section presents the ways in which the texts use and abuse this hypothetical case history (§5). Finally the Four Stages hypothetical case history is discussed as a systematising and organising structure (§6), the

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<sup>4</sup> An alternative name for this stage is *anāgāmin*.

<sup>5</sup> Manné, forthcoming.

statement that the religion required this sequence of stages is justified and the grounds are provided.<sup>6</sup>

As I said, this sequence of types of *samana* forms a sequence of stages of development or a hypothetical case history (HCH). I call this HCH the Four Stages HCH. The Four Stages HCH occurs in many different contexts besides these debate contexts. It demonstrates one of the Buddhists' various attempts to provide and to sustain a theory of stages, viz., the theory that Liberation is achieved through attaining in sequence different stages of development, and that these stages can be defined in a way that makes them recognisable in themselves and discernible from each other.

The distinguishing feature of this hypothetical case history is that, unlike the stages of the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* HCH<sup>7</sup> which take place over one life-time only, the developments it encompasses take place over more than one life-time. Two mutually connected Buddhist ideas require such a case history. One of these is the idea of transmigration, *samsāra*, the endless cycle of birth and death during which one is not necessarily always reborn as a human being but may be reborn as an animal, or in hell, or even in heaven, all of these types of rebirths being temporary by nature.<sup>8</sup> It is this long series of existences which involve beings in suffering.<sup>9</sup> The other, related idea is comprised in the term *karma*: "a causal relationship (that exists) between the present life and the next, or, more generally speaking, between one life and the following, the determining factor of which is held to be one's actions in the present

<sup>6</sup> For a different approach to these four stages see Horner (1936), Chapter VI; Masefield (1986), Chapter I.

<sup>7</sup> See 'Case Histories from the Pāli Canon I.'

<sup>8</sup> Takasaki, 1987 : 128. Cf. Lamotte, 1958 : 34ff.

<sup>9</sup> Lamotte, 1984 : 41.

life."<sup>10</sup> These connected ideas required a case history extending over more than one lifetime not only logically, but also at the very least to give hope to the practitioner who despairs of making it "this time round".<sup>11</sup>

The most important occurrences of this hypothetical case history are in the DN,<sup>12</sup> MN,<sup>13</sup> SN and AN, and so these texts form the basis of

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<sup>10</sup> Takasaki, 1987 : 129. Cf. Lamotte, 1958 : 36ff. Cf. also Gombrich (1984 : 12), "The Buddha declared *karman* to be purely an ethical matter, of thought, word or deed; and the quality of a *karman*, good or bad, virtuous or evil, lay solely in the intention behind it. The quality of an act depended only on the motive, regardless of who did it." See also Gombrich (1984 : 11f) on the relationship between the Buddhist interpretation of the concept of *karman* and its meaning in the context of brāhmaṇ ideology.

<sup>11</sup> Horner, 1936 : 211f.

<sup>12</sup> In 8 DN Suttas: the *Mahāli Sutta* (DN 6), the *Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16), the *Jana-Vasabha Sutta* (18), the *Mahā-Govinda Sutta* (19), the *Sakka-Pañha Sutta* (21), the *Sampasādāniya Sutta* (28), the *Saṅgīti Sutta* (33) and the *Dasuttara Sutta* (34). Three are debates: the *Mahāli Sutta* (DN 6), the *Lohicca Sutta* (12), and the *Sampasādāniya Sutta* (DN 28); three are Fantasies (this category was not defined in Manné, 1990; it comprises those stories and accounts about various non-human beings which are not usually considered believable: they are fantastic; it includes all Stories, Legends, Myths, and accounts of previous lives of the Buddha): the *Jana-Vasabha Sutta* (18), the *Mahā-Govinda Sutta* (19), and the *Sakka-Pañha Sutta* (21); the remaining two, the *Saṅgīti Sutta* (33) and the *Dasuttara Sutta* (34), are Sermons, and can be further categorised as Abhidhammic.

<sup>13</sup> In full in 4 Majjhima suttas: the *Akankhayya Sutta* (MN 6), the *Cūla Gopālaka Sutta* (MN 34), the *Nalakapāna Sutta* (MN 68) and the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118); in the form of the list of stages and fruits in the *Dakkhiṇavibhanga Sutta* (MN 142); in part in seven suttas: the *Cūlasīhanāda Sutta* (MN 11 here by implication as none of the stages are named; the *Atṭhakanāgarā Sutta* (MN 52, the stages *āsavānañ khayam pāpunāti* and *opapātika*); the *MahāMālurikya Sutta* (MN 64, the *opapātika*); the *Tevijja-Vacchagotta Sutta* (MN 70, *aññā* and *anāgāmitā*); the *MahāVacchagotta Sutta* (MN 73, stages (3) and (4) of the standard version); the *Brahmāyū Sutta*, (MN 91, *opapātika*); and the *Dhātuvibhanga Sutta* (MN 142, *opapātika*). Seven of these suttas are Sermons (MN 6, 11, 34, 64, 68, 118, 140), two are

(Continues...)

this study. The texts of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* and the *Vinaya Piṭaka* show minimal interest in this sequence of four stages and have been excluded on this ground, while the *Puggalapaññatti* and the *Kathāvatthu* of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, which do occupy themselves extensively with it, have been excluded on the ground that they are late texts.

## 2. THE LISTS OF STAGES AND THEIR ELABORATIONS

### 2.1. The lists of stages

The Four Stages HCH occurs in independent, sequential lists of stages or in sequential lists of stages associated with a particular practice. It has a standard version,<sup>14</sup> Version A below, a brief version of the standard version, Version B, below, and a brief version with fruits, Version C, below. There are also elaborations on individual stages which involve the insertion of substages. In presenting the material I will not be cataloguing all the minor textual variations.

#### Version A. The standard version.

1. *Idha .. bhikkhu tinnam samyojanānam parikkhayā sotāpanno<sup>15</sup> hoti avinipāta-dhammo niyato sambodhi-parāyano.* "At this stage a bhikkhu, through the disappearance of the three fetters, becomes a Stream-Enterer, characterised by freedom from (falling back to) lower existences, restrained, having Enlightenment as his goal."

Consultations (MN 52, 73 begins as a consultation and changes to a Debate), and one is a Debate (MN 91). I am not able to categorise MN 142.

<sup>14</sup> "Standard" because this is the version that occurs most frequently in the texts. This in no way implies that I think it is the original version of this HCH.

<sup>15</sup> Lit. "he who has attained the stream". See also Masefield 1986, 130 - 136 for a discussion of the etymology of this term.

2. *Puna ca param .. bhikkhu tinnam samyojanānam parikkhayā rāga-dosa-mohānam tamuttā sakadāgāmī hoti, sakid eva imam lokam āgantvā dukkhass' antam karoti.* "After that, a bhikkhu, through the disappearance of the three fetters, and through the reduction of passion, hatred and delusionment becomes a Once-Returner: having returned once only to this world, he makes an end of suffering."
3. *Puna ca .. bhikkhu pañcannam orambhāgiyānam samyojanānam parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyi anāvatti-dhammo tasmā lokā.* "And then, through the disappearance of the five fetters binding to the lower states, a bhikkhu becomes an Opapatika, and in that form he attains extinction; he is characterised by non-returning from that world."
4. *Puna ca param .. bhikkhu āsavānam khayā anāsavānam ceto-vimuttim paññā-vimuttim ditthe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati.* "And then, through the destruction of the intoxicants, he lives in the emancipation of mind and insight<sup>16</sup> that are free from intoxicants, having experienced it himself in this very lifetime through his own higher knowledge. (DN 6 I 156; cf. e.g. DN 18 II 200, 19 III 251f; MN 73 I 490, Stages 3 & 4 only; SN V 346, 356-360, etc; AN I 231f; II 88f; 238; IV 12; etc.).

(1) - (4) above comprise the most frequent version of this HCH.

The exact fetters, *samyojanas*, meant in (1), (2) and (3) must be inferred from various suttas; they are never specified in the *Nikāyas* either in the context of the Four Stages HCH or in the context of one particular stage. Where three fetters (*samyojanas*) are mentioned in these texts,

<sup>16</sup> See C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Dhs. tr. p.16f.

these are "personality belief" (*sakkāyadidhi*), "sceptical doubt" (*vicikicchā*), and "clinging to mere rule and ritual" (*sīlabbata-paramāsu*). Where five fetters (*samyojanas*) are mentioned in the texts, "sensuous craving" (*kāma-rāga*) and "ill-will" (*vyāpada*) are added. These five are called the "fetters binding to the lower states" (*orambhāgiya-samyojana*. DN III 234, vii; MN I 432; SN V 61; AN IV 459; etc.).

The stage *opapātika* may also be called the stage *anāgamin* (see versions B, C, and D below). These two terms are discussed in detail in §3.4. The relationship between *opapātika* and *anāgamin* has been totally overlooked by the CPD.

### Variations in the MN.

MN has particular variations. Stage 4 may appear as:

- 4.i      *bhikkhū arahanto khīnāsavā visitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīnabhavasamyojanā samma-d-aññā vimuttā*. "Bhikkhus who are Arahats, in whom the intoxicants are destroyed, who have fulfilled their lives, done what they had to do, put down their burdens, who have attained their own well-being, in whom the fetters to existence are destroyed, who are possessed of the highest knowledge, liberated" (MN 34 I 226),<sup>17</sup> or
- 4.ii     *āsavānam khayam pāpunāti* - "One who reaches the extinction of the intoxicants" (MN 52 I 350, 64 I 436, stages 3 and 4.ii only), or
- 4.iii    *aññāya sañthahīti* - "One who is established in the highest knowledge." (MN 68 I 466)

Stages (4) and (3) may be followed by the stage:

*sāvako gihi odātavasano kāmabhogī sāsanakaro ovādapati karō tinnavicikiccho vigata kathamkatho vesārajappatto aparappaccayo satthusāsane viharati*. "(A) layfollower who is a disciple, a householder clothed in white, and who, (though) an enjoyer of sense-pleasures, is a doer of the instruction, one who accepts the exhortation, who has crossed over doubt and, perplexity gone, fares in the Teacher's instruction, won to conviction, not relying on others". (MN I 491)

This citation shows that this stage is specific to lay followers.

### Version B. The brief version

The standard version occurs occasionally in the brief form:

1. *sotāpanna*, "the Stream-Enterer"
2. *sakadāgāmin*, "the Once Returner"
3. *anāgāmin*, "the Non-Returner"
4. Arahant. (SN III 168, V 200, 202; AN V 85 stages (1) - (3) only.)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Erghart, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> The brief version, as far as I have been able to ascertain, does not occur in either the DN or the MN. Each of the DN, MN, SN and AN contain both the standard version, and the brief version with fruits.

### Version C. The brief version with both stages and fruits

The brief version with both stages and fruits occurs more frequently than the brief version. In this HCH each of the stages of the brief version is attributed with a "fruit".

- 1      *sotāpanna*
  - 1.i     *sotāpatti-phala-sacchikiriyāya patipanna* - "one who has attained to the realisation of the fruit of stream-entry";
  - 2      *sakadāgāmī*
  - 2.i     *sakadāgāmī-phala-sacchikiriyāya patipanna* - "one who has attained to the realisation of the fruit of the Once-Returner";
  - 3      *anāgāmī*
  - 3.i     *anāgāmī-phala-sacchikiriyāya patipanna* - "one who has attained to the realisation of the fruit of the Non-Returner";
  - 4      *arahā*
  - 4.i.a    *arahattāya patipanna* - "the attainment of Arahatship",<sup>19</sup> or
  - 4.i.b    *arahattaphalasacckhikiriyāya patipanna* - "one who has attained to the realisation of the fruit of arahatship".
- (MN III 254)

### Version D. The brief version with fruits only

This may occur in the form of a list expressed as in 1.i, 2.i, 3.i, 4.i.b above (AN I 44f) or in the form: 1.i *sotāpatti-phalam*, 2.i *sakadāgāmi-phalam*, 3.i *anāgāmi-phalam*, 4.i *arahatta-phalam*. (DN 33 III 227, §xv, 34 III 277, §x; SN V 25)

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<sup>19</sup> DN 33 III 255 *attha puggala dakkhineyyā*, cf AN IV 292 *attha puggala āhuneyyā pāhuneyyā dakkhineyyā*; AN IV 204; SN V 202, § 18(8), here linked with the Five Indriyas, see section 2.3.1.i below; etc.

The stages may be listed with or without their fruits. They may be listed with the stages preceding the fruits as above, or in the opposite order: with the fruits preceding the stages.<sup>20</sup> The fruits may be listed independently of the stages.<sup>21</sup> The "fruits" may be presented as belonging to the person: *sakadāgāmī-phala*, *anāgāmī-phala*: "the fruit of the Once-Returner", "the fruit of the Non-Returner" (2.i and 3.i above), or as belonging to the attainment: *sotāpatti-phala*, *arahatta-phala*: "the fruit of the attainment of stream-entry" or "the fruit of arahatship" (1.i and 4.i above).

## 2.2 The Elaborations

The Four Stages HCH in the standard version and its variations contains a minimum of information. The expressions for the stages are a code, expressions in brief with whole concepts comprised in single words or in terse phrases. The AN and SN are concerned with elaborations of this HCH. There are two principle elaborations, the elaborations of the stage *sotāpanna* and the elaborations of the stage *anāgāmin*. The lists of stages sometimes contain "pre-stages", and it sometimes contains expressions for Liberation or Arahatship which vary from the standard version.

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<sup>20</sup> MN III 254f *cuddasa kho pan' im'*, Ānanda, *pātipuggalikā dakkhiṇā*; AN IV 372 *nava .. puggalā* (this list includes the *puthujjana* in the ninth place, see below); AN IV 373 *nava .. puggalā āhuneyyā pāhuneyyā dakkhinneyyā* (this list includes the *gotrabhū* in the ninth place, see below). Cf. AN IV 292 where the stages and fruits appear in the opposite order.

<sup>21</sup> SN V 25. DN 33 III 227 §xv, 34 III 277 §x. The list of the fruits alone occurs in both of these suttas in their sections on Fours but neither section contains a list of the Four Stages. The section on Eights in DN 33 III 255, quoted above) contains a list of both stages and fruits.

## 2.2.1 Elaborations of the pre-stages

A variety of pre-stages are attached to the lists of the stages and fruits. A pre-stage may be simply the stage of *puthujjana* "ordinary man",<sup>22</sup> or there might be further divisions:

- 0.a *bāhiraka kāmesu vitarāga* - "one who is beyond, and without attachment to sense-pleasures"
- 0.b *puthujjana-sīlavat* - "an ordinary person of moral habit"
- 0.c *puthujjana-dussīla* - "an ordinary person of poor moral habit"
- 0.d *tiracchānagata* - "an animal." (MN III 255)<sup>23</sup>

Pre-stages may comprise two types of followers, the *dhammānusārin* "one who lives in accordance with the dhamma" and the *saddhānusārin* "one who lives in accordance with faith" (SN V 200f, 12-15)<sup>24</sup> or simply the *gotrabhū* "a member of the religious community"<sup>25</sup> (AN IV 373), or the bhikkhu who is *sutavā*, "learned in religious knowledge" (SN III 167f).

## 2.2.2 Elaborations of the stage of Stream-Enterer, *sotāpanna*

The stage of *sotāpanna* is divided as follows:

- 1.a *So tiṇṇam samyojanānam parikkhayā sattakkhattuparamo hoti sattakkhattuparamam deve ca mānuse ca sandhāvitvā samsaritvā dukkhassa antam karoti.* 'Through the

<sup>22</sup> SN V 202; AN IV 372.

<sup>23</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS III 303. The subject of this sutta is the relationship between the worth and merit of an offering and the worth and merit of its recipient.

<sup>24</sup> The first precedes the second in this list. These two stages occur in a different HCH in the *Tevijja Vacchagotta Sutta*, MN 70.

<sup>25</sup> BHSD, s.v. *gotrabhū*.

- disappearance of the three fetters, he becomes one who will not be born more than seven more times; after transmigrating and being reborn seven more times among gods and men, he makes an end of suffering.'
- 1.b *So tiṇṇam samyojanānam parikkhayā kolāṅkolo hoti dve vā tīni vā kulāni sandhāvitvā samsāritvā dukkhassa antam karoti.* 'Through the disappearance of the three fetters, he becomes one who will go from clan<sup>26</sup> to clan; after transmigrating and being reborn in two or three more clans, he makes an end of suffering.'
  - 1.c *So tiṇṇam samyojanānam parikkhayā ekabījī hoti ekam yeva mānusakam bhavam nibbattetvā dukkhassa antam karoti.* 'Through the disappearance of the three fetters, he becomes one possessed of only one more seed (one more potential for rebirth) and once he has completed one rebirth among humankind, he makes an end of suffering.'
  - 1.d=2 *So tiṇṇam samyojanānam parikkhayā rāga-dosa-mohānam tanuttā sakadāgāmī hoti, sakid eva imam lokam āgantvā dukkhass' antam karoti.* "After that, a bhikkhu, through the disappearance of the three fetters, and through the reduction of passion, hatred and delusionment becomes a Once-Returner: having returned once only to this world, he makes an end of suffering." (AN I 233)

The last expression is the *sakadāgāmī* formula as in Version A (2). The list may appear in the abbreviated form: *sattakkhattoparama*, *kolāṅkola*, *ekabījī* (AN V 120).

The grammar of this passage gives equal weight to each of these four expressions. Further no past participles are used to indicate a

<sup>26</sup> BHSD, s.v. *kula*, "good family", "high social grade".

sequential development through these attainments. This passage, therefore, cannot be taken to describe three kinds of *sotāpanna* plus the *sakadāgāmin*, or three different transitional stages between *sotāpanna* and *sakadāgāmin*. Rather, it describes four different possibilities contingent upon the disappearance of the three fetters (*tinñam samyojanānam parikkhaya*) a phrase which we must take as a synonym for the term *sotāpanna*. As most usually the disappearance of the three fetters is presented as the characteristic of the *sotāpanna*, and this attainment coupled with the reduction of *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha* is presented as the characteristic of the *sakadāgāmin* (Version A), this passage points to a time when these two attainments were not yet clearly differentiated into separate and discrete stages of attainment. The question is, which of these two terms is the older? In §4.3,4 it is argued that the term *sotāpanna* is the older term.

### 2.2.3 Elaborations of the stage of Non-Returner, *opapātika/anāgāmin*<sup>27</sup>

There are no elaborations for the stage *opapātika*.

The stage of *anāgāmin* is divided into two or into five substages. The two types of *anāgāmin* are defined thus:

- i      *So aññataram santam cetovimuttim upasampajja viharati* - "He experiences the peace of mind which has a certain calm."
- ii     *So kāmānam yeva nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya paṭipanno hoti* - "He has followed a method leading to aversion towards,

<sup>27</sup> See Masefield, 1986 : 105 - 130 for an attempt to explain these terms, using both Canon and commentaries. This attempt is deemed magistral by Harrison (1987 : 262).

absence of desire for, and cessation of sensual enjoyments."  
(AN I 64)

The five types of *anāgāmin* are defined thus:

- 3.e    *antarāparinibbāyin* - "one who has passed into Nibbana before the term, i.e. before having passed the first half of life".<sup>28</sup>
- 3.d    *upahacca-parinibbāyin* - "one who attains Nibbana more than half-way through his next existence".<sup>29</sup>
- 3.c    *asamkhāra-parinibbāyin* - "one who attains Nibbana devoid of the (*skandha*) *samkhārā*".<sup>30</sup>
- 3.b    *sasamkhāra-parinibbāyin* - "one who attains Nibbana with the (*skandha*) *sakhara*".
- 3.a    *uddhamso ṫakinīthagāmin* - "one whose stream of life tends upwards to the Akiniha heaven". (DN 33 III 237, xviii; SN V 201 §15, 16; 202 §17; 204 §24; AN I 233; IV 13f, 145f; 380)<sup>31</sup>

Both of these definitions into types of *anāgāmin* occur in the AN. To the best of my knowledge the first is unique to AN.

### 2.2.4 Elaborations of the stage Arahat

The following expressions for the attainment of the stage Arahat may precede the stages and fruits elaboration.

<sup>28</sup> CPD, s.v. *antarāparinibbāyin*. The CPD for the most part follows the Kathavatthu.

<sup>29</sup> CPD, s.v. *upahacca-parinibbāyin*, following Ñaamoli, Pj I translation, p.199.

<sup>30</sup> CPD, s.v. *asamkhāra-parinibbāyin*.

<sup>31</sup> CPD, s.v. *uddhamso ṫakinīthagāmin*. In the DN there is no indication whether the list begins with the highest or the lowest of these stages. This may be taken to indicate that the DN has incorporated this list from another source.

*Elaboration 1*

- 4++ the Tathāgata,  
 4+ the Pacceka-buddha. (MN *Dakkhinavibharīga Sutta*  
 142 III 254)

*Elaboration 2*

- 4.i *dīttheva dhamme patihacca aññam ārādheti* - "in this lifetime, before death (*patihacca*?) he attains knowledge"<sup>32</sup>  
 4.ii *maranakāle aññam ārādheti* - "he attains knowledge at the time of his death". (SN V 237 §66)<sup>33</sup>

**2.3 The different interests of the DN, MN, SN and AN<sup>34</sup>**

In the DN the elaborations occur in the *Sangīti* (33) and the *Dasuttara Suttas* (34). The MN contains elaborations only in the *Dakkhinavibharīga Sutta* (142). In the SN and AN the elaborations of the individual stages frequently occur where the Four Stages HCH is imposed upon another independent HCHs. These two Nikāyas are independent in this respect.

**2.3.1 The SN***i The Indriyas HCH<sup>35</sup>*

The stages are defined in relationship to an independent implied HCH based upon the progressive development of the *indriyas* - "qualities" of faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*saññā*) and wisdom (*paññā*). When these qualities are completely developed the stage attained is that of Arahant. If the attainment is somewhat weaker various attainments in sequential order of weakening are offered. These may be the other three stages of *anāgāmin*, *sakadāgāmin* and *sotāpanna*, followed by certain pre-stages (*dhammānusārin* and *saddhānusārin* SN V 200f, §§12, 13, 14), or the stage of *anāgāmin* may be replaced by the list of the five varieties of *anāgāmin* (SN V 201f §§15, 16, 17), or the sequence may be comprised of the brief version with fruits (SN V 202, §18), or the stage of *sotāpanna* of Version A may be replaced by the three types of *sotāpanna* (SN V 204 §24).

Either the function of this connection in the texts is to make the progressive development of the *indriyas*, i.e. the Indriya HCH, of increased importance by connecting it with the Four Stages HCH, or the *indriyas* were already important and the Four Stages HCH gained importance by being imposed upon their progressive development. The latter is the more likely (see §4.2.ii below). The fact that the *puthujjana* occurs as a pre-stage in this section of the SN (V 202) seems important. He is defined as one in whom the *indriyas* are completely absent, while both of the other pre-stages mentioned above have some degree of attainment with regard to these. For this reason the *puthujjana* stands outside (*bahira*) all attainment. The development of the *indriyas* seems then to have been a possible criteria for deciding whether or not a person had entered upon the path or Stream.

<sup>32</sup> See Katz, 1982 : 19-20 for a discussion of the meaning of this term.

<sup>33</sup> The context here is the Indriya HCH, see 2.3.1.i below.

<sup>34</sup> Gethin has interesting things to say about these texts in the context of the *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*.

<sup>35</sup> See Gethin, 1992 : Chapter IV for a full study of the *indriyas*.

### *ii. The Seven Factors of Awakening HCH*

Two stages of Arahat (elaboration 2 in §2.2.4 above) and the elaborations of the stage of *anāgāmin* occur at SN V 69, within a HCH based on the seven factors of awakening (*bojjhangā*).

### *iii. The Seven Fruits of Mindfulness regarding the Breathing HCH*

Two stages of Arahat (elaboration 2 in §2.2.4 above) and the elaborations of the stage of *anāgāmin* occur also at SN V 314, §5, where these stages are described as "the seven fruits of (the practise of) mindfulness regarding in- and out-breathing" (*Evam bhāvitāya kho bhikkhave ānāpānasatiyā evam bahulikatāya ime satta phalā saittānisamsā paṭikanikhā ti*).

### 2.3.2. The AN

The AN is so constructed that "each section (*nipāta*) contains *suttas* dealing with subjects in some way connected with the number of the section".<sup>36</sup>

### *i The Three Trainings HCH.* (AN I 233f)

The sequence of stages here is not influenced by its context (the Book of the Threes), which is the Three Trainings (*tisso .. sikkhā*): viz., the higher morality (*adhisīla*), the higher thought (*adhicitta*), and the higher insight (*adhipaññā*):<sup>37</sup> the sutta is rather an attempt to relate the theory of stages to this context. The Three Trainings are presented as a HCH in their own right. Stage one is the full development of the higher morality (*adhisīla*), with the other forms of training developed to a certain

measure. The four attainments which are possible at this stage are the elaborations of the stage of *sotāpanna* (§2.2.2 above). The condition for the second stage is that the higher thought (*adhicitta*) should be developed in full. The attainments which are possible at this stage are the elaborations of the stage of *anāgāmin*. The condition for the third stage is that the higher insight (*adhipaññā*) should be developed in full. What is attained at this stage is Arahatship as in Version A, 4.

### *ii The Three Categories of Fetters HCH.* (AN II 134)

The stages are here defined in terms of an HCH based on a sequence of three discrete categories of fetters: (1) the fetters (binding) to the lower states (*orambhāgiya*); (2) the fetters binding to the taking up of rebirth (*uppattipatiṭṭabhika*); and (3) the fetters binding to the taking up of existence (*bhavapatiṭṭabhika*). The stages of development offered are that of the *sakadāgāmin* where none of these fetters are eliminated, and that of two types of *anāgāmin*: the *uddhamṣota akaniṭṭha gāmin* (3a) where the fetter to the lower states (*orambhāgiya*) is eliminated, the *antāra-parinibbāyin* (3e) where both the fetter to the lower states (*orambhāgiya*) and the fetter to the taking up of rebirth (*uppattipatiṭṭabhika*) are eliminated, and that of the *Arahat* where all of these fetters are eliminated (Cf. AN II 160).

The Anguttara Nikāya is a highly coded treatise. It emphasises aspects of the Teaching according to a numerical rule. To do this it is highly selective with regard to what it presents. Does it assume that stages 1 and 2 of the standard version of the Four Stages HCH will all be understood to be included by implication in the definition of the *sakadāgāmin* and similarly that the other four of the elaborations of the stage *anāgāmin* are comprised in the definition of the *uddhamṣota akaniṭṭha gāmin*? To the best of my knowledge the system of coding in the AN has not yet been fully studied, so it is impossible to say what may be implied in any particular case.

<sup>36</sup> Norman, 1983 : 54.

<sup>37</sup> Tr. Hare, GS I 211.

### **iii The HCH of the Three Trainings and the Three Categories of Fetters. (AN IV 13f, 145f)**

This variation combines the Three Trainings and the Three Categories of Fetters HCHs. Its context is gift-worthiness, and it presents the stages as follows: the Arahant, as in 4 of the standard version, another variety of Arahant,<sup>38</sup> and the elaborations of the stage of *anāgāmin*.

### **iv The Nine Types of Person HCH. (AN IV 379-381)**

This variation, based on nine types of person in conformity to its situation in the AN Book of Nines. The basis for the discrimination between types here is the monk's degree of achievement with regard to moral practice (*sīla*), concentration (*samadhi*) and insight (*paññā*). The list of stages it offers comprises the elaborations of the stage of *anāgāmin*, and the four elaborations of the stage of *sotāpanna*. Each of these stages is categorised:

*sa-upādisesā kālam kurumānā parimuttā nirayā parimuttā tiracchānayoniyā parimuttā pittivisayā parimuttā apāyaduggativinipātā.* "(they) when they die with some attached remainder, are altogether freed from hell, rebirth in the womb of an animal, the realm of ghosts, the untoward way ... lower existences."<sup>39</sup>

Either this is an expansion of the phrase *avinipāta-dhamma* - "characterised by freedom from (falling back to) lower existences" which

defines the stage of *sotāpanna* in Version A (1) or *avinipāta-dhamma* is an abbreviation of this phrase. In either case, by implication, all of these are *sotāpanna*.

## **3. THE INDIVIDUAL STAGES**

Individual stages receive individual treatment. They may be defined separately from, or in the context of other stages. This, however, happens only with the four stages of the standard version. It does not happen with any of the elaborations. This section presents these individual treatments. The individual stages are presented under the following headings:

### **1 Formulas relative to the stage, including attainment formulas.**

Attainment formulas are particularly important because they indicate a relationship between the declaration of the attainment of a stage and the challenge of the debate tradition. Attainment is frequently declared before the public of the Sangha, as well as before the Buddha or an important disciple. It may be challenged: monks will report to the Buddha that someone has proclaimed the attainment of a stage and ask for his verification. It may be defended.<sup>40</sup>

### **2 Attainments.**

### **3 The advantages concomitant on the attainment of the stage.**

### **4 The method for the attainment of the stage.**

<sup>38</sup> *Tassa apubbam acarimāñ ãsavapariyādānañ ca hoti jīvitapariyādānañ ca.*

"For him the cankers' ending and life's ending are at the same time, not one before and one after." Tr. Hare, GS IV 9. The various types of Arahant are not studied in this work.

<sup>39</sup> Tr. Hare, GS IV 252f.

<sup>40</sup> It is possible that the declaration of Arahantship was the equivalent of announcing that one has some "esoteric secret knowledge". Cf. Witzel, 1987 : 410 and Manné, 1990 : 2.1, iii.

- 5      *The relative frequency of the attainment of the stage.*  
 6      *The subdivisions of each stage.*

For reasons that will be evident, some of the stages require further headings. A review and discussion follow in §4.

### 3.2. *The stage of Stream-Enterer, sotāpanna*<sup>41</sup>

The *sotāpanna* is defined in terms of his beliefs and practices, his behaviour, his attitudes, his knowledge, his attainments, and his advantages. Methods which lead to the attainment of this stage are provided. This stage is attributed with two attainment formulas.

#### 3.2.1. *Formulas that define the stage of sotāpanna*

There are, besides the formula in Version A, three formulas that define the *sotāpanna*. These formulas describe his behaviour, A below, his beliefs and practices, B below, and his guaranteed attainment of Awakening, *sambodhi*, C below. Two of these formulas, B and C, are attainment formulas.

Two different sets of constituents, *arigāni*, are attributed to the stage of *sotāpanna*. They may be called either *sotāpattiyaṅgāni* "the constituents of the attainment of the stream", or *sotāpannassa arigāni* "the constituents of the Stream-Enterer". The distinction between these two expressions is not tightly maintained in the texts although they are not strictly synonymous. This absence of distinction suggests that what was implied in attaining the stream, "the constituents of the attainment of the stream", and the nature or "constituents of the person who had attained the stream", may once have been distinguished. Although neither of these terms is specific to, or dominates, a particular Nikāya, the

different sets of constituents are text-specific. What I have called the Behaviour Formula, (A), occurs only in the DN and the SN while what I have called the Belief and Practice Formula (B), occurs only in the DN, SN and AN. It cannot be excluded that two separate schools of thought existed, for one of which it was the constituents of Stream-entry - *sotāpattiyaṅgāni* that were important, while for the other it was the constituents of the Stream-Enterer - *sotāpannassa arigāni*. The constituents in each group are rather general, and, rather self-evidently, comprise the qualities that any religion would require of its followers. The elements of A cover behaviour and require a more active dedication to the practice, whereas those in B form a sort of *Credo*: followers were encouraged to convert their friends and family to the faith, expressed in that way (SN V 364, §16). The *Credo* is the formula that occurs most frequently.

#### A. The Behaviour Formula

*Sappurisa-samsevo, saddhamma-savanam, yoniso-manasikāro, dhammānudhamma-patipatti* - "He is one who associates with the good, hears the true Teaching, pays proper attention, and practices the Teaching in its completeness." (DN 33 III 227, §xiii. Cf. SN V 347, 404, etc.)<sup>42</sup>

I will refer to this expression as the Behaviour Formula because it describes what the *sotāpanna* does. Although this formula is rather vague, and none of its terms refer to specific practices, it indicates that practice was considered important.

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<sup>41</sup> See Masefield, 1986 : 134f for a discussion of the etymology of this term.

<sup>42</sup> Unless I have overlooked it, this expression does not occur in MN nor in the AN in this connection, although it does occur in the AN [II 245] in a different context.

## B. The Belief and Practice Formula - a *Credo*

This is an attainment formula. The belief system and moral practice of the *sotāpanna* is described in a different set of four constituents, the first three of which concern his faith while the last is concerned with his moral practice. These features comprise not only the attainments of the *sotāpanna*, but also one of his attainment formulas, expressions which when uttered in the first person identify the speaker as a *sotāpanna*.

*Cattāri sotāpannassa arigāni,*

- 1      *Idh'āvuso ariya-sāvako Buddhe avecca-ppasādena samannāgato hoti – "Iti pi so Bhagavā araham Sammā-Sambuddho vijjā-carana-sampanno sugato loka-vidū anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi satthā devaā-manussānam Buddha Bhagavā ti"*
- 2      *Dhamme avecca-ppasādena samannāgato hoti – "Svākkhāto Bhagavatā Dhammo sandīṭṭhiko akāliko ehi-passiko opanayiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhīti."*
- 3      *Samghe avecca-ppasādena samannāgato hoti – "Supaṭipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-Saṅgho, uju-patipanno Bhagavato savaka-Saṅgho, ṣaya-patipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-Saṅgho, sāmīci-patipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-Saṅgho yadidam cattāri purisa-yugāni, aṭṭha purisa-puggalā, eso Bhagavato sāvako-Saṅgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhineyyo añjali-kāraṇīyo anuttaram puñña-kkhettam lokassāti."*
- 4      *Ariya-kantehi silehi samannāgato hoti akhandehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññuppasatthehi aparāmathehi samādhisamvattanikehi.*

"The four constituents of the Stream-enterer: In this connection, friends, the Ariyan disciple has absolute faith in: (1) in the Buddha: "So he too, the Exalted one, is Arahant, supremely

enlightened, full of wisdom and goodness, Blessed One, world-knower, peerless driver and tamer of men, teacher of devas and men, Buddha, Exalted One!" (2) the Teaching: – Well proclaimed by the Exalted One is the Teaching, effective in this life, immediate, open to all, leading us onward, to be known personally by the wise. (3) the Order: – Well-practised is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples, living uprightly, practising right conduct and the proper course, which is the four pairs of persons; the eight classes of individuals; the view that this Order of the Exalted One's disciples is worthy of veneration, of offerings, of gifts, of reverent greetings, (and that it is) the unsurpassed field of merit of the world. (4) Endowed is he with moral practices lovely to the noble, fully observed, faultless, unspotted, unblemished, making men free, commended by the wise, uncorrupted, conducive to concentration.'(DN 33 III 227, §xiv. Also at AN IV 406; SN V 343f, 345 etc.)<sup>43</sup>

I will refer to this expression henceforth as the Belief and Practice Formula because "1" - "3" above express the *Credo* of the *sotāpanna* and "4" his moral practice (*sīla*).

The moral practice requirement, "4" above, suffers several adaptations. Some of the adaptations may be regarded as creative (oral-)literary inventions, as poetic license or as mistakes, made in good faith, caused by the way the Teaching was promulgated. Other types of adaptations, by contrast, simply introduce other features of the Teaching where it seems that they did not originally belong. A further group of

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<sup>43</sup> Unless I have overlooked it, this expression is not found in MN in connection with the *sotāpanna*. These beliefs may appear under the name of "Four Dhammas" (SN V 342f, 346f, 351, 356, etc.), "Four Results of Merit: Four Skills" (*puññābhisaṃdha kusalābhisaṃdha*, SN V 391f), or "Four Deva-paths to the Devas". (Tr. Woodward, KS V 337. *devānam devapadāni*. SN V 392ff.)

adaptations, however, are evidently purpose-serving in the worst possible sense of the term. These function in ways that help the institutionalised religion to control its lay-followers through a system of spiritual rewards. The adaptations all occur in the *Sotāpattisamyutta*, SN V 342-413.

One adaptation is simply synonymous. It introduces a condition based on the rules of the training for laymen. After hearing a sermon on the importance of conforming to the *ariyāni* above, Anāthapiṇḍika, the house-father (*gahapati*), declares, in brief, that he conforms to conditions "1" - "3" and adds:

- 4.i *Yāni cimāni bhante Bhagavatā gihisāmīcikāni sikkhāpadāni desitāni nāham tesam kiñci attani khanḍam samanupassāmī ti - .. as to those obligations binding on a housefather, pointed out by the Exalted One, I see not a single one of them which is broken in me." (SN V 387)<sup>44</sup>*

Upon hearing this, Ānanda praises Anāthapiṇḍika and acknowledges him as a *sotāpanna*. The obligations binding on the housefather and on all laymen, are to abstain from killing any living being (*pānātipāta*), from stealing (*adinnādāna*), from unlawful sexual intercourse (*kāmesu micchācāra*), from lying (*musāvāda*), and from the use of intoxicants (*surāmerayamajjapamādatthāna*). These obligations are also known as the five *sīla*. As the standard fourth feature of this utterance concerns the *sīla*, this expression must be regarded as a variation upon it.

One evidently purpose-serving variation promotes generosity towards the monks. Here (SN V 348-352) the Buddha is in discussion with some chamberlains, functionaries of some position in the royal household.<sup>45</sup> When he tells them under which conditions a person is a *sotāpanna*, instead of "4" above, he proposes:

<sup>44</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 333.

<sup>45</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 303, see especially explanatory footnote no.1.

- 4.ii *vigatamalamaccherena cetasā agāram ajjhāvasati / muttacāgo payata pānī vossaggarato yācayogo dānasamvibhāgarato.* "He lives at home with heart free from the taint of stinginess. He is open-handed, pure-handed, delighting in self-surrender, one to ask a favour of, delighting to share charitable gifts," (SN V 351. Cf. SN V 392, 397).<sup>46</sup>

and further on in the sutta:

- 4.iii *Yam kho pana kiñci kule deyyadhammam sabban tam appativibhattam sīlavantehi kalyānadhammehi.* "In your family, whatever gifts of charity there be, are shared fully and impartially by the virtuous and the good." (SN V 352)<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 306. In SN V 397 the questioner asks about the "the advanced (*ariya*) disciple in whom the constituents of the attainment of the stream do not exist" (*ariyasāvakassa cattāri sotāpattiyaṅgāni ... natthi*. The literal translation for *ariyasāvaka* is "the noble/exalted disciple", but I think that phrase is misleading in English and not really true to the Pali, being too literary and missing the sense.) The reply is that such a person (*yassa*) stands outside [all attainments] and is designated an "ordinary man" (*puthujjana. Bāhiro puthujjanapakkhe thito ti vadāmi*). In the explanation that follows, however, the term *ariyasāvaka* is repeated without the qualification *cattāri sotāpattiyaṅgāni*. It is easy to construe the text as if the term *ariyasāvako* is meant to pick up and be synonymous with expression *ariyasāvakassa cattāri sotāpattiyaṅgāni*. I think that that is what the redactors want of their audience, and indeed I have followed it in my analysis. I have doubts, however, and I wonder whether an examination of this type of literary construction, namely the dropping of the qualifying phrase in a response, could provide some evidence that, for example, the phrase *cattāri sotāpattiyaṅgāni* is in fact a later insert: it would prove it if the texts usually picked up the whole expression in these cases.

<sup>47</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 306.

This freedom with the fourth condition did not escape remark by the inquiring minds of the time, and there is evidence that there was an unresolved question whether there were in fact three conditions, "1" - "3" above, or four conditions, "1" - "4" above, before one could be called a *sotāpanna* (SN V 371ff), i.e. whether faith was enough or whether some degree of practice was necessary. I say "unresolved", because the Buddha provides no solution in the sutta in which this problem comes up.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this general blithe tendency to open the stage of *sotāpanna* to all and sundry through simplifying the required attainment to that of faith alone, one sutta contains a warning. When asked if a disciple who possessed "the constituents of the attainment of the stream", the *sotāpattiyangāni*, could ever be described as "One who lives in indolence" (*pamādavihāri*), the Buddha replies that indeed he could as long as he was content with these attainments and made no further effort (SN V 398).

### C. The *sotāpanna* attainment formula

I refer to this attainment formula as the "*sotāpanna* attainment formula", simply because the term *sotāpanna* occurs within it and with no implication that it is more or less important than the Beliefs and Practices attainment formula. The existence of an attainment formula relates the attainment of stages to the Debate tradition where the assertion of one's religious expertise designates what one is willing to be challenged upon and to defend in public.<sup>49</sup> Just as there are various attainment formulas that may be formally recited upon becoming an Arahat or which when formally recited indicate that the speaker is an

<sup>48</sup> Or the answer has been lost, or was inconvenient and so intentionally left out.

<sup>49</sup> See Witzel, 1987 : 374, Manné, 1990.

Arahat,<sup>50</sup> there are attainment formulas which, when recited, indicate that the speaker has attained *sotāpanna*. One of these is the Beliefs and Practices Formula, B above. The other is:

*khīnanirayo 'mhi khīnatiracchānayoni khīnapittivisayo khīñāpāyaduggativinipāto, sotāpanno 'ham asmi avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano.* "Gone, for me, is (a future existence in) hell, gone the realm of animals, gone the realm of spirits (*peta*), gone is suffering in the realms of misery; I am a Stream-Enterer, characterised by freedom from (falling back to) lower existences, restrained, heading for Enlightenment." (AN IV 405; DN 16 [II 93]; SN V 387, etc.)<sup>51</sup>

This is the great advantage of the attainment of becoming a *sotāpanna*. These conditions correspond to the attainments in the standard version of the Four Stages formula.

These two *sotāpanna* attainment formulas are quite different in content: one concerns faith and practice while the other concerns rebirth in hell. Although the Beliefs and Practices formula has no reference to this freedom from low rebirths and this assuredness of awakening, at least one attestation links the attainments expressed in these two formulas: the SN says that once the four beliefs and practices, here called *dhammas*, are attained, "There is no terror, there is no panic, there is no fear of death in terms of (fearing) what belongs to the next world." (*na hoti uttāso na hoti chambittattam na hoti samprāyikam marañabhayam* f. SN V 387)

<sup>50</sup> See e.g. Erhart, 1977 for those in the MN.

<sup>51</sup> There is an indication at SN V 361f that this Buddhist attainment of liberation from rebirth in a hell is linked to brahmin beliefs concerning the importance of attaining rebirth in heaven: in this sutta the Buddha ridicules brahmin practices which purportedly lead to being reborn in heaven.

### 3.2.2 The attainments of the stage of *sotāpanna*

The attainments of the *sotāpanna* may be comprised in terms of the elements of Version A.1 of the Four Stages HCH, in terms of the formulas that define the *sotāpanna*, in terms of conditions for uttering the attainment formulas, or in terms of the attainment of specific skill in, or understanding of features of the Training.

The behaviour, the belief system and the moral practices of the *sotāpanna* are his general attainments: they are levels of conduct and thought that he has achieved. Whereas the Behaviour Formula is not much exploited by the texts and does not serve as an attainment formula, the Beliefs and Practices Formula is defined as an attainment formula and is extensively exploited. The conditions under which it may be uttered are specifically defined. Sometimes these conditions relate directly to the Beliefs and Practices formula, sometimes they relate to it indirectly. The conditions for uttering the *sotāpanna* attainment formula overlap with those for uttering the Beliefs and Practices formula.

The most obvious condition for pronouncing the Beliefs and Practices formula is that the disciple is possessed of the Beliefs and Practices in the formula (cf. also SN V 357). The conditions may also be defined under the poetic name of the Fivefold Guilty Dread (*pañca bhayāni verāni*, SN II 68f).<sup>52</sup> The Fivefold Guilty Dread comes about if the moral requirements (*sīla*, the fourth condition of the Beliefs and Practices Formula), are not fulfilled. This is a "behaviour" condition. According to some suttas this formula may be pronounced on the sole condition that the Fivefold Guilty Dread is removed (AN IV 405 and SN II 68ff, V 387ff).

The formal requirements that permit the utterance of the *sotāpanna* attainment formula overlap extensively with those for uttering

the Beliefs and Practices formula but are defined in a somewhat different way. The conditions are not always consistent.

The requirement of behaviour may here also be expressed as the removal of the Fivefold Guilty Dread. The requirement of belief and moral practice may be tautologically defined as the possession of the beliefs and moral practices of the *sotāpanna* (here called *sotāpattiyaṅgāni*). Further, a requirement of knowledge called "the noble rule, well-seen and well-penetrated by insight" (*ariya nāya*), may be added (*ariyo cassa nāyo paññāya sudittho hoti supaṭividdho*. SN II 70; cf. SN V 387ff). The attainment *ariya nāya* is a specific, rather than a general attainment and refers to a particular aspect of the Teaching. It means thoroughly and systematically giving the mind to "dependant origination" - *paṭiccasamuppāda*: "This being, that comes to be; this not being, that does not come to be. From the arising of this, that arises; from the ceasing of this, that ceases" (*Iti imasmim sati idam hoti / imasmim asati idam na hoti / imassuppādā idam uppajjati / imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhati*). The processes that depend sequentially upon each other for their coming into existence are: "ignorance, activities, consciousness, name and form, the six sense-modalities, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, rebirth, and death" (*avijjā, saṅkhārā, viññāna, nāmarūpa, saṅkhyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti, marana*).<sup>53</sup>

Further conditions for the utterance of the *sotāpanna* attainment formula may be expressed in terms of the attainment of "seven good practices and four desirable states" (*sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato ... catuhī ākarākhiyehi thānehi*. SN V 352-356). The seven good practices are divided into two in the form of purity in bodily conduct: not taking life and not stealing; one in the form of purity in personal conduct in terms of abstaining from wrong practices in respect of sense desires (the example in this sermon is based on not committing adultery); and four in

<sup>52</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS II 47.

<sup>53</sup> For a study of this process see Johansson, 1979.

the form of purity of speech: avoiding lying, slandering, harshness and aimless chatter. Both personal purity and abstention are required, as is encouraging like behaviour in others. The four desirable states are the contents of the Beliefs and Practices formula. These conditions amount to the moral requirements (*sīla*), with the exclusion of the condition regarding intoxicating substances. They are particularly offered to lay people who describe themselves as materially ambitious - wanting houses, children, perfumes and money, and who have among their desires the wish to be reborn in heaven.

### 3.2.3 Attainments defined in terms of specific skills in, or understandings of the Teaching

The attainments of the *sotāpanna* are defined according to many different features of the Teaching. The suttas containing these further aspects are very much a feature of the *Sotāpattisamyutta*, SN V 342-413, although they are not limited to this textual location.

A definition of the constituents of Stream-Entry (*sotāpattiyangāni*. SN V 347f) in terms of the Noble Eightfold Path - *atthangika magga* is attributed to Sāriputta. In this sutta the Buddha and Sāriputta may be said to be in a game of definitions or riddles. Sāriputta defines these constituents thus: *sota* is the Noble Eightfold Path which comprises right view, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (*ariya atthangika magga*: *sammā-ditṭhi*, *-sankappa*, *-vācā*, *-kammanta*, *-ājīva*, *-vāyāma*, *-sati*, *samādhi*), and the *sotāpanna* as someone who has achieved that path. This is a problem because a classical aspect of the attainments of the Arahant is that he has completely followed and fully achieved the path leading to the extinction of the *āsavās*, which is precisely this Noble Eightfold Path (MN I 55; etc.). Later in this chapter of the SN the Buddha praises Sāriputta for his ability to divide the *sotapattiyangāni* in ten ways. It is not clear what is meant as Sāriputta

has enumerated aspects "1" - "4" of the beliefs of the *sotāpanna*, the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path (as above), right knowledge (*sammāñāna*) and right release (*sammāvimutti*). Perhaps on this occasion the Buddha did not count individually the elements of the *sotāpanna* beliefs, or did not count them at all.

A stipulation is made in SN III 203, 23 that when doubt regarding six<sup>54</sup> points has been abandoned and also when doubt about suffering, the arising of suffering, the ceasing of suffering and the path to the ceasing of suffering has been abandoned, then the person can be called a *sotāpanna*.<sup>55</sup> The six views, as the MN (I 135f) explains so much more clearly, are that whatever depends on (1) physical form (*rūpa*), (2) feeling (*vedanā*), (3) perception (*saññā*), (4) conditioned states (*saṃkhāras*), (5) consciousness (*viññāna*) or (6) a mental activity<sup>56</sup> is impermanent (*anicca*) and suffering (*dukkha*) and is liable to change (*viparināmadhamma*). A person who is not clinging to what is impermanent, suffering and liable to change will not take up various defined wrong ideas. These wrong ideas - a truly marvellous compendium of them - are, in brief:

- "Winds do not blow, rivers do not flow, pregnant women do not bring forth, moon and sun neither rise nor set, but (all) are stable as a pillar" *Na vatā vāyanti na najo sandanti na gabbhiniyo*

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<sup>54</sup> The Burmese text has *ca* here, so it is possible that the expression means doubt about the points made in the sermon. Woodward comments, "It is hard to know how six are made out". (KS III 165, fn.1)

<sup>55</sup> *sotāpanno avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano ti*. SN III 203, and in each of the suttas in this chapter of the SN.

<sup>56</sup> *Yam pidam ditṭham sutam mutam viññātam pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā* "what is seen, heard, sensed, known, attained, sought after, thought out by the mind". See Gombrich, 1990 : 15f for the relationship between these views and Yājñavalkya's views in BāU.

*vijāyanti na candimasūriyā udenti vā apenti vā esikaṭṭhāyiṭṭhitā ti.*<sup>57</sup>

- "This is mine, this is me, this is my self" *Etam mama eso ham asmi eso me attā ti.*<sup>58</sup>
- "This is the self, this is the world, this I will be after death: permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change" *So attā so loko so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariñānadhammoti.*
- "I would not be, and it would not be mine; I shall not be, and it shall not be mine" *No cassam no ca me siyā na bhavissāmi na me bhavissatī.*<sup>59</sup>
- The annihilationist doctrine that there is no fruit of good or evil deeds, not beings who have attained perfection, nor life after death.<sup>60</sup>
- The heresy that there is neither evil nor merit.<sup>61</sup>
- The accidentalist heresy that there are neither conditions nor causes.<sup>62</sup>
- Another wrong way of viewing the world including ideas of permanence, and ideas that there are no causes.<sup>63</sup>
- "The world is eternal" *sassato loko ti.*
- "The world is not eternal" *asassato loko ti.*
- "The world is limited" *antavā loko ti.*
- "The world is unlimited" *anantavā loko ti.*
- "The soul is the body" *Tam jīvam tam sariran ti.*
- "The soul is one thing, the body is another" *aññam jīvam aññam sariranti.*
- "The Tathāgata exists" *hoti tathāgato.*

<sup>57</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS III 164.

<sup>58</sup> Tr. Gombrich, 1990 : 15.

<sup>59</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS III 48.

<sup>60</sup> The doctrine of Ajitakesakambala, cf. DN I 55, § 23.

<sup>61</sup> The view of Pūraṇa Kassapa, cf. DN I 52, § 16.

<sup>62</sup> The heresy of Makkhali-Gosāla, cf. DN I 53, §19.

<sup>63</sup> That of Pakkudha Kaccāyana, cf. DN I 56, § 26, combined with that of Makkhali-Gosāla, cf. DN I 53f, § 20.

- "The Tathāgata does not exist" *na hoti Tathāgato.*
- "The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist" *hoti ca na ca hoti Tathāgato.*
- "The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist" *neva hoti na na hoti Tathāgato.* (SN III 202-216)

The attainment of the *sotāpanna* in this respect is that he has no doubt that bodily form and mental processes are impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and liable to change (*avipariñāmadhamma*), and is hence free of the wrong views above, although is not yet liberated. The SN here, as in the previous example, opposes the *sotāpanna* with the Arahat. It points out that the person who is liberated, the Arahat, has turned away from (*nibbindati*) all of these processes (SN III 224, §20).

There are also conditions based on the attainment of certain qualities, *indriyas*.<sup>64</sup> Several variations on the definition of the *sotāpanna* each with a new condition for the attainment of this stage, and a different Arahat formula from the one that usually occurs in this context (Version A, 4) occur further on in the SN in a series of four suttas in a chapter on *indriyas* (SN V 193f ii-v). Instead of being defined in terms of the more usual Three Fetters condition, the *sotāpanna* is defined in terms of a Five Indriya condition:

*Yato ... ariyasāvako imesam pañcannam indriyānam samudayañca atthagamañca assādañca ādīnavañca nissarañañca yathābhūtam pajānāti / ayam vuccati bhikkhave ariyasāvako sotāpanno avinipāta-dhammo niyato sambodhi-parāyano ti.* "A noble disciple, brethren, is called "A noble disciple, a Stream-Enterer, characterised by freedom from (falling back to) lower existences, restrained, having

<sup>64</sup> This term may refer to qualities of conduct or to the six sense faculties.

Enlightenment as his goal,' when he understands as they really are, the rising, the disappearance, the satisfaction, the danger, and freedom from these Five Qualities."<sup>65</sup>

Here the five qualities (*indriyas*) are faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*pannā*).<sup>66</sup> Once again the stages of *sotāpanna* and Arahant are contrasted with each other. The stage of Arahant<sup>67</sup> is attained by "seeing" (*viditvā*) the five *indriyas* above, whereas the activity or attainment of the *sotāpanna* is "understanding" (*pajānāti*) them.

Further new definitions for the attainments of the stage of *sotāpanna*, which use the same formula as above, are expressed in terms of a Six Sense-Faculty condition, (also *indriyas*):<sup>68</sup> the faculties of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind (*cakkhundriya*, *sotindriya*, *ghānindriya*, *jivhindriya*, *kāyindriya*, *manindriya*. SN V 205 para 26.(5)) and a different five *Indriya* condition: happiness, suffering, joy, dejection, and equanimity (*sukh-*, *dukkh-*, *somanass-*, *domanass-* and *upekhindriya*. SN V 207, §32.(2)).<sup>69</sup>

In this section of the SN, *indriyas* of all sorts are very important.

<sup>65</sup> SN V 193 § 3, cf. SN V 193, § 2 which omits *samudayañca attangamañca*. The last part of this formula appears in the formula through which the attainment of *sotāpanna* is declared. See 3.2.5 below.

<sup>66</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 169.

<sup>67</sup> Here this stage is described by a different arahant formula from that which usually occurs in this context ((4) above), *araham khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikhīnabhava samyojano sammadaññā vimutto*.

<sup>68</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 181.

<sup>69</sup> In both of these cases the subsequent sutta defines the arahant in terms of these *indriyas*, and uses the formula *Yato ... ariyasāvako ... above*.

### 3.2.4. The advantages of having attained the stage of *sotāpanna*.

The advantages of having attained the fruit of Stream-Entry are, of course, implied in all of the attainments and all of the formulas above. They will not be repeated here. The texts, however, also specify them in this way: the *sotāpanna* has: (i) certainty as to the True Teaching, (ii) no tendency to diminution (of attainment, presumably), (iii) none of the suffering of a limited person, and (iv) endowment with uncommon knowledge; (v) he has both understood the cause and the dhammas that have come about through the cause (*saddhammaniyato hoti*, *aparihānadhammo hoti*, *pariyantakatassa dukkham na hoti*, *asādhāranena nānena samannāgato hoti*, *hetu c'assa sudiṭṭho hetusam-muppannā ca dhammā*. AN III 441, XCV). The *sotāpanna* has gone beyond simply hearing the Teaching and having faith in it: he has entered upon certainty. There is no mention of freedom from rebirth in this list.

#### Summary of §§3.2.1-4

What we have observed is that the Beliefs and Practices formula fulfils several functions. It both expresses and defines *sotāpanna* attainments, it functions as an attainment formula and it expresses the conditions under which a person may declare himself a *sotāpanna*. These conditions are to a certain degree uncertain. Even if the requirements of this formula are fulfilled, further conditions may be added. Attainment may be declared through this or through a different formula. The conditions under which this formula may be declared are similarly not always consistent. Neither formula mentions freedom from rebirth though this aspect may occur in a sutta that contains the formula.<sup>70</sup> We have further observed that attainments may also be expressed according

<sup>70</sup> See e.g. SN V 387. I have not searched for more examples.

to many different features of the Teaching. The essential attainment of the *sotāpanna* is the moral code, *sīlas*, more or less strictly adhered to. The inclusion of other attainments is unconvincing. One is left with the impression of attainments in search of a named stage, the stage being a definable measurement.

### 3.2.5 The method for attaining the stage of *sotāpanna*.

Several methods are provided for attaining the stage of *sotāpanna*. These methods are expressed in two ways: what must be thought or done specifically for attaining this stage; and what must be done in terms of a particular element of the Teaching which, through being cultivated, will lead to Stream-Entry and to each of the other three stages progressively. Methods may be specified or implied. The *sotāpanna* formula in Version A implies a method which leads to the disappearance of the three fetters. The basic method for attaining this and the other stages is the cultivation of the moral requirements (*sīla*, AN I 231f). It is further necessary to aim to fulfil the qualifications of the Behaviour formula and the Beliefs and Practices formula, to be generous and charitable to the monks; to understand dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*); and to conform to certain *indriya* conditions.

Some suttas specify that the method for development through the stages depends on more practice of the same thing. For example, in order to attain this stage and the three further stages one needs to develop progressively the practice of "mindfulness centred on the body" (*kāyagatā-sati* AN I 44). The correct contemplation of the five grasping groups (*pañcupādānakkhanda*), in order to be able to see them as "impermanent, suffering, a disease, an abcess, a sting (arrow), a pain, an affliction, alien, decaying, empty, and without self" (*anicato dukkhato rogato gandhato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato yoniso manasi kattabba*. SN III 167f, §122) will also lead to this attainment. Instead of the initial requirement that the monk be

well-taught (*sutavā*), the requirement that he have his moral practice in order (*sīlavā*) may be found (SN III 167f, §123).

The method for attaining the fruit of Stream-Entry is defined in terms of the Behaviour formula: it requires the development and the practice of these behaviours (SN V 410f).

Conditions that preclude the attainment of this stage and, obviously, of any of the others, are also described. This implies that training to avoid these specified conditions forms an aspect of the method for attaining the stage. Thus a bhikkhu who perceives permanence in the conditioned states (*sankhāras*) cannot achieve the appropriate intellectual receptivity<sup>71</sup> for attaining any of the four stages. So he must train himself in the direction of perceiving impermanence (AN III 441, XCVI).

There is no record in DN, MN, AN or SN of an individualised or personal instruction for the attainment of this stage.

### 3.2.6 The Relative Frequency of the Attainment of the stage of *sotāpanna*.

With regard to relative frequency of attainment of the four stages, there is only one sutta, SN V 406 (§§ 6-8), that gives any information. This sutta says that there are few (*appakā*) monks who are arahats, more (*bahutarā*) who are *opapātikas* (§ 6), even more who are *sakadāgamins* (§ 7) and even more who are *sotāpannas* (§ 8). The stage of *sotāpanna* is, thus, the most frequently attained stage.

### 3.2.7 Types of *sotāpanna*

#### i The Once-Returner (*sakadāgamin*) as *sotāpanna*

The lists of §2.2.2 offered four types of *sotāpanna* defined according to the number of rebirths each could expect, *sattakkhattuparama*, 7

<sup>71</sup> BHSD, s.v. *anulomikā khanti*.

rebirths; *kolaṅkola*, 2 - 3 rebirths; *ekabijin*, one seed or potential; *sakadāgāmin*, 1 rebirth. The structure of this passage shows that it regarded the *sakadāgāmin* as a type of *sotāpanna*.<sup>72</sup>

### *ii The Non-Returner (*anāgamin*) as *sotāpanna**

An AN sutta (V 120) defines five *sotāpannas*, who are perfected here on earth (*idha nīṭṭhā*): the *sattakkhattuparama*, the *kolaṅkola*, the *ekabijin*, the *sakadāgāmin*, and one who is an Arahat in this lifetime (*yo ca ditthe' eva dhamme arahā*); and a further five Stream-Enterers who, having abandoned this place, i.e. the earth, (*idha vihāya*), are perfected: the *antarāparinibbāyin*, the *upahaccaparinibbāyin*, the *asankhāraparinibbāyin*, the *sasankhāraparinibbāyin*, and the *uddhamṣota akaniṭṭha gāmin* (see §2.2.3. Cf. also AN V 119f). As the latter group attain their liberation from a different world from this one, they are *anāgāmin*.

### *iii The Arahat as a *sotāpanna**<sup>73</sup>

The *sotāpatti-samyutta* (SN V 342-413) shows that the category *sotāpanna* could be very wide, and that the Arahat too could fall within it. An AN sutta (V 120) is clear about this. In it the Buddha is says, "All those who have perfect faith in me are Stream-Enterers" (*ye keci bhikkhave mayi aveccappasannā, sabbe te sotāpannā*). In any case it makes sense that each advanced stage of development includes the attainments of the previous less advanced stage.

## 3.3. The stage of Once-Returner, *sakadāgāmin*

Although this stage has considerable importance in the AN elaborations of the brief standard version, I have barely been able to find a passage that makes a more individual reference to it and its contingent qualities and attainments. Hence most of the headings which I proposed in the introduction to this section are empty.

### 3.3.1 Formulas that define the stage of *sakadāgāmin*

The only formula attached to this stage occurs in Version A of the Four Stages HCH. This stage has no attainment formula.

### 3.3.2 The Attainments of the stage of *sakadāgāmin*

Besides the attainments of reducing passion, hatred and delusion (*rāgadosamohānam*), expressed in the standard formula, this stage is not attributed with clear conditions under which its attainment can be ascertained. Only at SN V 411 does this stage appear at all individually. There four dhammas are proclaimed which when developed lead to the attainment of the fruit of this stage. The sutta stops there. The repetitive nature of this part of SN must mean us to understand these dhammas to be the same as the four constituents of the *sotāpanna* (3.2.1.B), and specified in the preceding sutta (SN V 410f), and to apply to the fruits of the attainment of the stage of *anāgāmin* and Arahat (see SN V 411, the following suttas). It may be that the text wants in this way to make the point that each attainment includes the accomplishments of the previous attainment. If this is the case, it is not very clearly put. In any case, at this point in this part of the SN, everything seems to be the same as everything else and all distinctions seem to be falling away.

<sup>72</sup> The arguments in favour of this position can be found in §§ 2.2.2 and 4.3.4.

<sup>73</sup> See Bareau, 1955 : 261.

### 3.3.3 The advantages of having attained the stage of *sakadāgāmin*.

The advantages contingent upon the attainment of this stage are not set forth in the texts under study beyond their appearance in the standard version of the Four Stages HCH. By implication, and as the etymology of the name indicates, the great advantage to this stage was that only one reincarnation was required before liberation would be attained.

### 3.3.4 The method for the attainment of the stage of *sakadāgāmin*.

There is no method given in these texts for moving up to this particular stage from the stage of *sotāpanna* besides that to be inferred from the standard formula, namely, effort towards the attainment of the diminution of passion, hatred and delusionment (*rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*).

### 3.3.5 The Relative frequency of attainment of the stage of *sakadāgāmin*.

The stage *sakadāgāmin* is more frequently attained than the stages *arahat* and *opapātika*, and less frequently attained than *sotāpanna*. (SN V 406, cf. §3.2.6)

### 3.3.6 Types of *sakadāgāmin*

Rather than there being types of *sakadāgāmin*, the lists of §2.2.2 suggest that the *sakadāgāmin* was a type of *sotāpanna*. (See §3.2.7.)

### 3.4 The stage of Non-Returner, *opapātika/anāgāmin*

This stage presents us with two particular problems: (1) its terminology, as this stage is known under two names; and (2) the way it is defined. In defining this stage, the central issues that the texts are involved with are the difference between a Returner and a Non-Returner, the different types of Non-Returners, and the difference between the Non-Returner and the Arahat. Passages devoted to defining the psychology or the mental state of the *anāgāmin* him- or herself are rare, and there are none devoted to defining that of the *opapātika*.

In this section I will begin by considering the terminology. After that the headings will conform to those of the previous sections. The issue of the difference between a Returner and a Non-returner will be treated in the section on attainments (§3.4.2). The issue of the difference between the Non-Returner and the Arahat is treated in its own section, after a brief section on the Arahat (§3.5).

#### The Terminology

This stage is designated by two terms: *opapātika* and *anāgāmin*. The term *opapātika* is rather precise and comes from what we might call a biological context, but which in terms of ancient India is probably more accurately considered philosophical; it means "born by spontaneous generation". The word *anāgāmin* means simply "not coming back". These terms are not used interchangeably in the same expressions; rather, each one has its own territory. The term *opapātika* is standard where all four stages are expressed in the standard version of this case history, where the attainment of this stage is expressed separately from the other stages but in terms of the standard expression (MN ii 146), and in debate and mythical contexts. In formulas related to psychological aspects, including attainments, but with the exception of the standard version, the

term *anāgāmin* is used. Neither of these terms appear in the elaborations of this HCH.

### i The term "opapātika".

Both the contexts and the formulas within which the term *opapātika* occurs independently of its connection with the other stages, suggest that it is an ancient term. The context is either a Debate or it is connected with mythology.

The debate context concerns the wrong view: "There is no gift, no offering, no sacrifice; there is no fruit or ripening of deeds well done or ill done; this world is not, the world beyond is not; there is no mother, no father, no beings spontaneously reborn (*opapātika*); there are no recluses and brāhmins in the world who have gone right, who fare rightly, men who by their own comprehension have realised this world and the world beyond and thus declare."<sup>74</sup>

A similar expression occurs in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1 I 27). Here the "evasive arguer" (*amarā-vikkhepika*) will avoid giving an answer to a number of points including whether the *opapātika* exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, neither exists nor does not exist (*Atthi sattā opapātikā? N'atthi sattā opapātikā? Atthi ca n'atthi ca sattā opapātikā? N'ev' atthi na n'atthi sattā opapātikā*), whether deeds have results (*sukataḍukkaṭānam kammānaṁ phalaṁ vipāko*), whether a world beyond exists - *paraloka*, and whether the Tathāgata exists. Further there is Kassapa's argument in the *Pāyāsi Sutta* (DN 23): the

<sup>74</sup> *natti dinnam natti yittham natti hutam, natti sukaṭadukkaṭānam kammānaṁ phalaṁ vipāko, natti ayam loko natti paro loko, natti mātā natti pītā natti sattā opapātikā, natti loke samanabrāmanā sammaggatā sammāpatipannā, ye imañ ca lokam parañ ca lokam sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedenti ti.* AN V 265 (tr. Woodward, GS V 178) and variously. This expression occurs in each of DN, MN, AN and SN. See CPD, s.v. *opapātika*. The relationship between *opapātika* and *anāgāmin* has been overlooked by the CPD.

whole of this sutta is a debate about this view. One of Kassapa's points in this argument is that the world beyond, *opapātikas*, and the results of deeds cannot be seen by the physical eye (*mamsa-cakkhu*), but only by a sufficiently trained person who has developed the Divine Eye (*dibba cakkhu*).

The term *opapātika* occurs also in contexts which demonstrate that it formed part of contemporary mythology, although at the time it might have been believed to express a biological fact. One occurrence is concerned with defining types of birth: "There are four types of birth: oviparous, viviparous, from moisture, spontaneously" (*Catasso yoniyo. Andaja-yoni, jalābuja-yoni, samseṭṭaja-yoni, opapātika-yoni*. DN 33 III 230. §xxvi; MN 12 I 73; SN III 240-5. That this context is mythical is shown in the SN (III 240-246), which concerns *Nāgas*, who are mythical beings. Their birth is described as being of four types as above, with the *opapātika* being the best type. Each of these types of *nāga*, however, is equally keen to keep the sacred days in order to achieve rebirth in heaven. The following book of this volume (SN III 246-9) occupies itself with the relationship between the *Supaṇṇa*, a mythical bird, and the *Nāga*. *Supaṇṇas* too are subject to these four kinds of birth. A further mythological context occurs where the *opapātika* appears among beings that one might come across teaching the Dhamma in a celestial state (*devanikāya*) if one was reborn there (AN II 186).

The contexts in which the term *opapātikā* occurs suggests that this is an ancient term and indeed also an old issue. The debate contexts connect Buddhism with a more ancient Indian tradition.<sup>75</sup> If we accept them as evidence, then the issue of whether or not a being that comes into existence without the occurrence of a sexual act exists was debated. This would imply that different groups held different views about it and that the Buddhists were themselves required to take up a position. This notion

<sup>75</sup> See Witzel, 1987; Manné, 1990.

therefore cannot be taken to be a Buddhist invention. The fact that this term has a mythological context also supports this view. It too entitles us to think that this concept was not original to Buddhism. From the character of these contexts the likely history of the term *opapātika* is that it was imported by the Buddhists into the context of stages of development from mythical and philosophical or biological contexts. Through the consistent use of *opapātika* in the standard version of this HCH, which is also its most frequent expression, it is possible that *opapātika* is an older term than *anāgāmin*. It's possible history within Buddhism is that it was originally a metaphor which later became a technical term.

#### ii The term *anāgāmin*: the issue of the difference between the Returner and the Non-Returner

The etymology of this term shows that it designates a state of not returning, of not coming back. The issue of the difference between a "Returner" and a "Non-Returner" is particularly an AN preoccupation.

The difference between a "Returner", and a "Non-Returner", is defined: the grounds for discrimination are whether their fetters (*samyojana*) are internal (*ajjhatta*) or external (*bahiddhā* AN I 63ff). Both the Returner and the Non-Returner "live (in obedience to) the moral practices, restrained with the restraint of the obligations; proficient in following the practice of right conduct, (they) see danger in the slightest faults: (they) take up and train (themselves) in the rules of morality" (*silavā hoti pātimokkha-saṃvarasamvuto viharati ācāra-gocara-sampanno anumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvī samādāya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu*. AN I 63). Each finds himself in a certain company of gods after death (*so kāyassa bhedā param marana aññataram devanikāyam uppajjati*. ibid.). The *āgāmin*, however, on leaving that existence, comes back to this world (*so tato cuto āgāmī hoti āgantā itthattam*. ibid.). He suffers this fate because his fetters are personal or internal.

#### 3.4.1 Formulas, including attainment formulas

The *anāgāmin*, like the *sotāpanna* and the *arahat*, has his attainment formula:

*Yāni cimāni bhante Bhagavatā pañcorambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni desitāni nāham tesam kāñci attani appahīnam samanupassāmi* "Moreover, as to those five fetters of the lower sort shown by the Exalted One, I do not see a single one of them in myself that is not abandoned." (SN V 177f)<sup>76</sup>

This formula, however, exists only in the SN, and is declared only by the *gahapatis*, (Sirivaddha (V 177) and Mānadinna (V 178). Although it is acknowledged by the Buddha to indicate their attainment of the stage of *anāgāmin*, one cannot attach any weight to its existence. There is not enough evidence to believe that this *anāgāmin* attainment formula was ever used in a debate situation.

#### 3.4.2 *anāgāmin* attainments

The standard definition of this stage of attainment under the designation *anāgāmin*, and the key condition for its attainment, as the standard version shows, is the abandoning of the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni*, cf. SN V 159f), and the diminution of the destructive emotions of passion, hatred, and delusionment. Various texts describe the five lower fetters (see under Version A, §2.3) but these specifications are never given in the context of the *anāgāmin*. From this one may conclude that abandoning the five lower fetters was a recognised stage of development that existed prior to the invention of the *anāgāmin* and that it got attributed to the him after he was invented.

<sup>76</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 156f.

Beyond the above there is very little further information about this stage. One sutta defines conditions for the attainment of the fruit of this stage. Unless one has given up six things: "disbelief, shamelessness, recklessness, indolence, forgetfulness in mindfulness and foolishness" (*assaddhiya, ahirika, anottappa, kosajja, muṭṭhasacca, duṭṭapāññatā*. AN III 421)<sup>77</sup> one cannot realize its fruit. Depending on whether or not one follows suttas that place the fruit before the stage (§2.1, Version C) the *anāgāmin* either has, or is developing these qualities.

Other attainments are implied, especially that the *anāgāmin* has all the *sotāpanna* attainments but at a higher level. This is sometimes specified: e.g. the *anāgāmin* will have progressed further with regard to his comprehension of the five grasping groups (*pañcupādānakkhandā*), than have the earlier stages (SN III 167f, §122).

I have found no information regarding the behaviour and beliefs attained by those who have attained the stage of *anāgāmin*.

### 3.4.3 The advantages of having attained the stage of *anāgāmin*

The advantage in attaining this state is the assurance of non-returning.

### 3.4.4 Methods for the attainment of the stage of *anāgāmin*

A method is given to attain this stage. This is the method to transcend the five fetters which belong to the lower world. This can be achieved by becoming clear about the teaching, "Were I not then, it would

not now be mine. It shall not be, and mine it shall not be (*No cassa no ca me siyā na bhavissati na me bhavissatī*. SN III 56).<sup>78</sup>

### 3.4.5 Relative frequency of attainment

This stage is rather frequently attained either in its own right (AN I 64, II 160, IV 63 etc.), or as one possibility among the first three stages of this HCH (AN V 86), or specifically in opposition to Arahantship.<sup>79</sup> It is more frequently attained than the stage *arahat*, but less frequently than the other two stages (See also §§ 3.2.6 and 3.3.5).

### 3.4.6 Types of *anāgāmin*

The texts may divide the *anāgāmin* into two types or into five types (see §2.2.3). Both of these definitions into types of *anāgāmin* occur in the AN. To the best of my knowledge the division into two types is unique to AN while DN, SN and AN support the division into five types. The relationship between the two types and the five types of Non-Returner described here, is neither made explicit through clarification in the suttas nor indicated implicitly through an overlap of vocabulary between substages.

In general none of the substages of the *anāgāmin* receive any further clarification, except on one occasion in the AN (IV 70-74). Here a bhikkhu has achieved certain attainments: he has reached the idea: "If it were not, it would not be mine; it shall not become, for me it shall not

<sup>78</sup> Tr. from Woodward, KS III 48; see also fn\* for reading of text. SN III 205, quoted under "Sotāpanna attainments", above has *no cassam*.

<sup>79</sup> *dvinnam phallānam aññataram phalam pāṭikankham dittheva dhamme aññā sati vā upādise anāgāmitā*. DN II 315; MN I 63, etc; AN III 82, 143, etc.; SN V 129, 181, 285. "of two fruits one may be expected in this very life, to wit: realization, or, if there be any substrate left, the state of non-return." Tr. Woodward, KS V 159.

<sup>77</sup> Tr. Hare, GS III 297.

become; what is, what's become, that I abandon" (*no c'assa, no ca me siyā, na bhavissati, na me bhavissati, yad atthi yam bhūtam, tam pajahāmī ti* (AN IV 70);<sup>80</sup> the first part of which is the method for attaining this stage, he has obtained equanimity (*upekkhā*) and, "He is not attached to rebirth or to birth; he has seen through the highest insight the peace which is the path to the greatest advantage Nibbāna, but he has not seen this path completely, and he has not completely abandoned the tendencies to pride, to lust for rebirth, and to ignorance" (*So bhave na rajjati, sambhave na rajjati, attuttariṁ padam santam sammapaññāya passati; tañ ca khvassa padam na sabbena sabbam sacchikatam hoti, tassa na sabbena sabbam mānānusayo pahīno hoti, na sabbena sabbam bhavarāgānusayo pahīno hoti, na sabbena sabbam avijjānusayo pahīno hoti.* AN IV 70). Once the five fetters binding to the lower states disappear, he becomes one of the five types of *anāgāmin*. Here, these different types are distinguished by means of the simile of an iron slab which is heated and beaten, and gives off fragments which take different amounts of time to cool down, and whose cooling down has different effects on the environment. A fragment may simply cool down, or cool down having risen up into the air, or cool down without harming the ground: this is comparable with the substage *antarāparinibbāyin*. A fragment which cools down having harmed the ground, is comparable with the substage *upahaccaparinibbāyin*. A fragment which falls on and sets fire to a small heap of grass and sticks which, for want of fuel, becomes extinguished when this is used up is comparable with the substage *asankhāraparinibbāyin*. A fragment which falls on a large heap is comparable with the substage *sasankhāraparinibbāyin* and a fragment which sets fire to a large heap of fuel and whose fire spreads to the surrounding shrubland and woodland and so forth before cooling down, is comparable to the *uddhamsoto akiniṭṭhagāmin*. The final paragraph is devoted to explaining *anupādā parinibbāna* -"Nibbāna that does not take

<sup>80</sup> Tr. Hare, GS IV 40f.

up any more fuel". This is done by means of an arahant formula, but not that of the Four Stages HCH (*āsavānam khayā .. pe .. sacchikatvā upasampajja vihariti.* AN IV 74). This simile is based on the way the Buddhists understood the etymology of the word *nibbāna*,<sup>81</sup> which provides the metaphor of the going out of a fire. Its use here is beautiful and poetic, and enhances the idea of "extinguishing", which is used to explain Nibbāna, by providing an illustrative image, but it provides no real facts or standards for discriminating between the different types of *anāgāmin*.

### 3.5 The Arahat.

An adequate study of the variety of descriptions of this stage in the context of Case Histories would require a very long book of its own, and no efforts in this direction will be made here. The authenticity of this stage is not, I think, in question - at least the word is not disputed as an epithet for the person who has attained liberation, the ultimate goal in Buddhism. What is interesting in this context is the vague and undefinable line between Arahat and *anāgāmin* that is so often evident in AN and SN, and that occurs in DN also.

### 3.6 *anāgāmin* vs Arahat.

It is evident that at a certain point in the history of Buddhism there was a confusion between the stages of Arahat and *anāgāmin*, and a problem in separating them, and the issue was their individual attainments. This confusion shows up primarily in the AN. Thus, one who develops five dhammas which are the constituents of psychic power (*idhipadhāna*): the concentrations on will, mind, effort and investigation (*chanda-, citta-, viriya- and vīmamsā-samādhī*) will attain either the fruit

<sup>81</sup> PTSD, s.v. *nibbāna*.

of *aññā* (a synonym for Arahantship as §2.2.4, 4.i and 4.ii above show<sup>82</sup>), in this very life-time (*dīṭṭh'eve dhamme*) or, should there be any remainder (*upādisesa*), the state of non-returning (*anāgāmitā*, AN III 82. Cf also SN V 129-133, 236 § 65 (5); MN I 481 above). There is no information regarding the conditions under which a remainder would exist, and thus no explanation why one stage rather than another should be attained. Similarly, when the mind of a bhikkhu is encompassed about his going forth according to rule and evil, unskilled dhammas that have arisen do not occupy his mind, and it is encompassed about the concepts of impermanence (*anicca*), non-self (*anatta*), the repulsive (*asubha*) and danger (*ādinava*), and about knowing the equal and the unequal (*sama*, *visama*) and the production and annihilation (*sambhava*, *vibhava*) and the creation and destruction of the world (*samudaya*, *aṭṭhangama*), and about abandoning (*pahāna*), absence of passion (*virāga*) and cessation (*nirodha*), then he will either have attained *aññā* or *anāgāmitā*, as above (AN v 108). Further it is said that the attainment of any of the four *jhānas* will result either in the attainment of the stage Arahat, or in that of the stage *anāgāmin*, both stages expressed in conformity with the standard version (AN V 343). No reasons are given why one of these stages rather than the other should be the result of any *jhāna*.

In general, the difficulty of recognising stages was recognised in the AN. It addresses itself also to the difficulty of identifying stages in relation to attainments. Three great sages of Buddhism, Saviṭṭha, MahāKoṭṭhita and Sāriputta, discuss which is the most excellent, persons with the attainment of *kāyasakkhi*, *dīṭṭhippatta* or *saddhāvimutta*. Each has a different preference, and so, to decide the matter, the Buddha is consulted. The Buddha's response is that it is not easy to tell: any among them could be either a *sotāpanna*, a *sakadāgāmin* or a *anāgāmin* (AN I 118).

## 4 REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

This discussion will begin with a consideration of the authenticity and the history of the list of the stages with their fruits. It will then go on to treat the elaborations of this list of stages. After that the authenticity of the individual stages will be considered, and finally the differences between the DN, MN, SN and AN will be examined. Section 5 concerns the way this hypothetical case history is used, and abused, in the texts. section 6 will consider how this HCH came about.

### 4.1 The stages and their fruits

The most regularly occurring variation of this HCH is that of the stages and their fruits. The relative frequency with which this version occurs poses the question whether it is a variation of the Four Stages HCH or whether it is an elaboration of the brief version which it came to replace. Two particular features show that it is indeed an elaboration. The first is its inconsistency: as was said above, sometimes in this listing the stage will precede its fruit, and sometimes the fruit will precede its stage. The second shows also the cause of these irregularities: it lies in the structure of the original expression. The Pāli phrase which most ususally introduces this formula: *sotāpanno sotāpatti phala sacchikiriyāya patipanno* (DN III 255 = AN IV 204 = AN IV 292 = SN V 202, §18(8)), can be translated, "the Stream-Enterer, who has entered upon", or "obtained", or "who regulates his life by, the experience of the fruit of stream-entry", in other words, the phrase *sotāpatti phala sacchikiriyāya patipanno*, may be construed to qualify the term *sotāpanno*. In this case why take the phrase to indicate two distinct stages? The reason is both because certain texts give these specifically as separate stages (MN III 254), and because others indicate in their introductory phrases that this list contains eight items (AN IV 292). But are they right? I think not. It makes sense that if one has attained something, one will, by definition,

<sup>82</sup> See Katz, 1982.

enjoy its fruit, i.e. the reward for one's efforts, afterwards, and that the fruit of some action cannot be obtained before the completion of the action, i.e. the attainment of the purpose or goal. Both the grammar of the formula and the inconsistency of the ordering of the stages and their fruit indicate that the division into stage and fruit is spurious.

This list may have come into the tradition in the following way. During the process of evolution of this HCH, it became necessary to attribute a stage with bringing certain benefits, and, obviously, if stages exist, they must indeed do so. In a passion for categorising, i.e. making dhammas of, everything, the rather intangible benefits became transformed into the rather tangible fruits. This process was assisted by the misconstruing of the structure of a phrase. The artificiality of this procedure is evident in the confusion of the texts with regard to what comes first: the stage or its fruits. This elaboration, therefore, cannot be taken to refer to genuine stages in a process of development. This is despite the attempt to authenticate it in the AN, where the Buddha is attributed with each of these fruits (AN I 23). This attempted authentication is not carried as far as the chief disciples who, to the best of my knowledge, are never attributed in the DN, MN, SN or AN either with any of the stages lower than Arahat, or with their fruits, with the exception of *sotāpanna*. We can thus see that both the list of stages and fruits and the list of the fruits alone are the result of a misunderstanding of an expression. This misunderstanding has created a tradition.

## 4.2 The Elaborations

As was shown in §2, these standard versions suffer various elaborations. These elaborations, or parts of them, occur as integral parts of AN and SN, but are evidently imported into the DN via its Abhidhammic-style suttas (DN 33 and 34), and do not occur at all in MN.

### 4.2.1 Elaborations of the stages *sotāpanna* and *anāgāmin*, and of the pre-stage: the Buddhist interest in measuring attainment

The elaborations seem to have come about through a fascination with measuring attainments. This had led to two of the original stages, the stage of *sotāpanna*, and the stage of *anāgāmin*, receiving subdivisions (see §2.2.2 and 3). The subdivisions take place according to specific criteria. One important criterion for the division of the stage of *sotāpanna* is the number of rebirths to be expected, rebirths which take place in this world, and which are human incarnations.

The stage *anāgāmin* is divided in different ways. One of these ways is in terms of the location and period of the rebirth that will be obtained: among various kinds of gods, for various lengths of time, and under various conditions.<sup>83</sup> Other criteria may seem to be highly technical as in *sasaṅkhāra-*, *asañkhārā-*, the state of the *sankhāras*, and *upahacca-* or *antarā-parinibbāyī hoti*, the exact moment of attaining Nibbāna. There is also the metaphor of the fragments of the iron slab which illustrates the very fine nuances between the divisions of this stage (§3.4.6).

The wish to create a system of measurable attainments extends to the stage prior to entry into the stages of this HCH. This pre-stage may be called that of the Ordinary Man, (*puthujjana* MN, SN), or of the disciple "who lives in accordance with the *dharma*", (*dhammānusārin*), or "who lives in accordance with faith" (*saddhānusārin* - SN), or of the person who is "beyond, and without attachment to sense-pleasures", (*bāhiraka kāmesu vītarāga*), or at its lowest level, an animal (*tiracchānagata*). The three terms *dhammānusārin*, *saddhānusārin* and *bāhiraka kāmesu vītarāga* attest to a certain minimal level of attainment (§2.2.1).

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<sup>83</sup> See Horner, 1936 : 246 - 251.

#### 4.2.2 The elaborations connected to other aspects of the Teaching

The SN connects this HCH with the Indriyas HCH, the Seven Factors of Awakening HCH, and the Seven Fruits of Mindfulness on the Breathing HCH (§2.3.1). The AN connects this HCH with the Three Trainings HCH and the Three Categories of Fetters HCH (§2.3.2). The questions that have to be asked here are: (1) How can we be certain that these are indeed elaborations of the Four Stages HCH rather than separate HCHs, or stages intrinsic to the other HCH? and (2) How can we be certain that it is the Four Stages HCH which is imposed and the other HCH which "receives" this imposition, and not vice versa? The answer to the first question is that this can be inferred from the texts through their use of a particular vocabulary, including synonyms, and also through their structure, that these elaborations belong to the Four Stages HCH. The answer to the second question is that if all reference to the Four Stages HCH were omitted from any of the "receiving" HCH, these HCHs would still stand as independent HCHs. I think there can be no doubt in these cases that the various attainments existed in the form of independent HCHs, and that the concepts and terminology of the developing Four Stages HCH were imposed upon them.

### 4.3 The individual stages

#### 4.3.1 The Arahat

I do not put this stage in question, nor do I put in question the use of this term to designate the stage of the attainment of Enlightenment or Liberation. It was in general use in this sense among various groups who sought liberation.<sup>84</sup> Its usage throughout the Canon is consistent. It always occurs in the expression for the Buddha's credentials in the debate tradition.<sup>85</sup> It is very frequently used in many other circumstances in phrases qualifying the term "Buddha". It is used to designate the attainment of the monk who has achieved Nibbāna, the goal of the Buddha's teaching. On all of these grounds, I take the view that it is an early term, in use at the time of the Buddha himself, and with this meaning.

#### 4.3.2 The stage of the Non-Returner, *opapātika/anāgāmin*

The attainments of the stage of Non-Returner are rather cursorily given and not much attention is paid to the method for obtaining them (§3.3.4).

I suggested that the term *opapātika*, "born by spontaneous generation", was a metaphor which became a technical term and a synonym for "Non-Returner" (§3.4). This idea is precisely expressed in the term *anāgāmin* whose etymology leaves nothing to be guessed, and which, as in the case of the Once-Returner, *sakadāgāmin*, shows that it was invented to cover one particular situation: that of having escaped the

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<sup>84</sup> "... this same term (or its equivalent ...) was also used by the Jainas, and perhaps the Ājīvikas ... to designate those who have reached the highest stage possible while still embodied as human beings." See Bronkhorst, 1986 : 6.

<sup>85</sup> Manné, 1990 : 2.1.ii.b, quote 16.

destiny of coming back. What could have been the issues that gave rise to the need for this notion? It is generally agreed that the Buddha taught that Enlightenment could be attained in this very lifetime (*ditth'eva dhamme*).<sup>86</sup> That leaves a rather problematic issue: what would happen if the practitioner nearly became an Arahat in this very lifetime - but not quite. If there was a possibility of losing all that one hoped to have gained in pursuing a goal whose attainment could not be guaranteed, what could persuade or encourage more than the minimum amount of ardent disciples - almost certainly not enough of them to sustain the religion - that the effort was worth it. The notion of rebirth was very likely available and elegantly solved the problem. It therefore seems likely that the notions and terms Once-Returner (*sakadāgāmin*) and Non-Returner (*anāgāmin*) were incorporated into Buddhism at a time when the Buddhists needed to emphasise the effectiveness of their practice, whether death intervened or not.<sup>87</sup> The important feature with regard to the promulgation the Teaching at that time was that it lead, not only to the high goal of Arahatship, but also, as the names show, to *not coming back*.

The attention paid to the issue of the difference between the *anāgāmin* and the Arahat, and the lack of clarity and precise definition suggests that the invention of the notion of *anāgāmin* created difficulties in this direction.

<sup>86</sup> See Bronkhorst, 1986 : 93.

<sup>87</sup> I do not wish to give the impression that this was the only reason and means through which the notion of Liberation after death entered Buddhism. See Bronkhorst, 1986 : 94f for several interesting textual examples of the tendency in Buddhism to postpone liberation until after death. These examples show that this notion was coming into Buddhism in many different ways.

#### 4.3.3 The stage of the Once-Returner, *sakadāgāmin*

Of all of the four stages of this HCH, the stage of *sakadāgāmin*, receives the least attention in the texts. The etymology of this word shows that the stage was invented to cover one particular situation: that of having as one's destiny only one more occasion of rebirth. Behaviour, beliefs, advantages connected with this stage, methods for its attainment, and an attainment formula are all sadly missing, with the exception of the contents of the phrase in the standard Variation 1A. That expression tells us that the *sakadāgāmin* potentially destructive emotions of anger, hatred and delusionment are diminished, and that he will only be reborn one more time.

#### 4.3.4 The stage of the Stream-Enterer, *sotāpanna*

The attestations in §3.1 show that the primary characteristic of the *sotāpanna*, his chief attainment, is his faith (the Beliefs and Practices formula, §3.2.1.B) although attention was also drawn to the possibility that originally practice was important (the Behaviour formula, §3.2.1.A). The adaptability of the fourth condition of the Beliefs and Practices formula, especially when used as an attainment formula, provides evidence that the reward of this stage of attainment was offered for supporting the Sangha. Occasionally more difficult attainments were required for this stage, for instance achieving the Noble Eightfold Path (§3.2.2) which is often represented as the attainment of the Arahat, or applying one's mind to the Causal Law - *paticcasamuppāda* (§3.2.2). Sometimes going beyond doubt with regard to certain aspects of the Teaching was a required attainment, or attainments are required with regard to certain *indriyas* (§3.2.3). These additional requirements, however, can safely be regarded as late as, first of all, they do not appear in either of the attainment formulas, and besides that they occur only in

the SN. They may be evidence of an attempt to raise standards (at least among the followers of the SN tradition).

The multiplicity of the information regarding the *sotāpanna*, and its many contradictions, suggests that this notion is an early element in the development of Buddhism which has evolved and been intensely elaborated in the course of time. With regard to the designation of the stage of *sotāpanna*, at least in the view of AN, all of the other stages of this HCH are simply types of *sotāpanna*. (AN V 120) This passage provides an important key to our understanding of this stage. I argued above (§4.3.1) that the stage of Arahant may be taken to have existed from the beginning of Buddhism. I have argued too (§4.3.2) that the stage *anāgāmin* solves the problem of what would happen if the practitioner nearly became an Arahant - but not quite, by offering a sort of guarantee, a saving clause for the promise that enlightenment was attainable during this lifetime. The stage *anāgāmin* contradicts the basic<sup>88</sup> Buddhist teaching that Enlightenment is attainable in the present lifetime. This discrepancy shows that this stage was invented later, and most likely after the time of the Buddha. The same must be said about the stage of *sakadāgāmin* which is so minimally developed in the texts. The close comparison between the etymological structure of these two terms suggests that they came into being together to serve the same purpose. This brings us to the question of the stage of *sotāpanna*. What is the origin of the stage of *sotāpanna*? The answer is that it was originally the stage, or perhaps more accurately the state of convert.<sup>89</sup> The *sotāpanna* was originally no more and no less than someone who had converted to Buddhism. Converting means having faith, conforming to a certain belief

<sup>88</sup> See Bronkhorst, 1986 : 93f.

<sup>89</sup> See Rhys Davids DB I 200, where he translates *sotāpanna* with "a converted man". Cf. Masefield, 1986 : 135 who equates the *sotāpanna* with the *sāvaka* and the *dīttisampanna*. Masefield is more interested in showing homogeneity than in investigating differences and therefore follows the first methodological approach that Schmithausen (1990) has defined.

system and following a minimum number of rules of morality (*sīla*). The *sotāpanna* does all of these things. Originally, then, at the time of the Buddha, there were converts, and Arahants - practitioners who had attained Liberation. The invention of the stages of *anāgāmin*, and *sakadāgāmin*, however, necessitated the elaboration of the state of being a convert into the stage of *sotāpanna*. In this way the four stages HCH came about. This being the situation, there is no surprise in the fact that the texts present the *sakadāgāmin* as a type of *sotāpanna*, as they do the *anāgāmin* and the Arahant (AN V 120). There is also no surprise either in the fact that *sotāpanna* is the most frequently attained stage (SN V 406).

In this way the four stages HCH came about.

#### 4.4 The difference in interest in this HCH between the DN, MN, SN & AN

##### 4.4.1 The standard version, the brief version and the elaborations.

The standard version of this HCH and the brief version with fruits occur consistently in all of the four Nikāyas of this study except for the brief version which appears to be absent in the DN and the MN. Other elaborations occur minimally in the DN and MN and then only in texts that are undoubtedly late additions to these collections. Only the MN has variations within the context of this HCH of the expression for the fourth of the Four Stages, the Arahant.

It is the SN and the AN which are most interested in the elaborations of this HCH. In general these texts agree on the elaborations as they appear in the lists. There are, however, interesting differences between them. One concerns the pre-stages, another concerns the sub-stages of the stage of *sotāpanna*, and a further difference concerns the fact that with regard to the elaborations connected to other aspects of the Teaching, the SN (§2.3.1) and AN (§2.3.2) contain completely

different and unrelated information. With regard to the first point, the SN offers two pre-stages which are undoubtedly designed to accommodate two types of followers, those who live in accordance with the *dhamma* (*dhammānusārins*) and those who live in accordance with faith (*saddhānusārins*), while the AN offers no pre-stages. This may be taken to indicate that the SN reciters were more in touch with their lay followers, and more required to please and to accommodate them, than their AN colleagues. This position is supported by the SN's generally greater interest in the stage of *sotāpanna* (see below). With regard to the second point, the substages of the stage *sotāpanna* occur only as a list of terms in the SN, while the AN explains the terms. This suggests that the AN may have originated these ideas or at least that the SN took them over from the AN. With regard to the third point, this gives the impression that the SN and the AN had a somewhat different view of the Teaching.

#### 4.4.2 The individual stages

##### i The stage of Stream-Enterer, *sotāpanna*.

The Nikāyas show distinct and different interests in the individual stages. MN shows no interest in defining the *sotāpanna*, nor in attributing qualities to him. It contains only the standard version and the brief version with fruits. The DN contains both the Behaviour Formula and the Beliefs and Practices formula, but both of these occur only in the Sangīti Sutta (DN III 227). It contains the *sotāpanna* attainments, but these occur only in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN II 93), which is also a particular case.<sup>90</sup> The AN contains the Beliefs and Practices Formula (AN IV 406) and the condition for uttering it (the Fivefold Guilty Dread condition AN IV 405). It contains the *sotāpanna* attainments, and it alone contains a list of advantages on the attainment of

the stage of *sotāpanna* (AN III 441). It contains certain recommendations regarding the method for attaining all of the stages (AN I 44; 231f). It incorporates all the other stages into that of *sotāpanna*, by dividing *sotāpannas* up into 10 types and subsuming the various types of *anāgāmin* into this stage, and by taking the view that all those with faith in the Buddha are *sotāpanna* (AN IV 120). It is the SN, however, that is really interested in the *sotāpanna*. It contains the Behaviour formula (SN V 347, 404, etc.), the Beliefs and Practices formula (SN V 343f, 345, etc.), and the conditions for uttering these formulas (SN II 68f; V 387f). It contains the variations on this formula that adapt it for laymen (SN V 387) or that adapt it in the direction of generosity towards the monks (SN V 352), as well as the doubts about these adaptations (SN V 371; 398). It adds qualifications beyond those of the Behaviour, and the Beliefs and Practices formulas, such as application to the causal law, *paticcasamuppāda* (SN V 387), the attainment of seven good practices and four desirable states (SN v 352-356), a condition based on views (SN III 202-224), and two five *indriya* conditions (SN V 193f; SN V 207), and a six *indriya* condition (SN V 205). It proposes methods, such as contemplating the five grasping groups, *pañcupādānakkhandhā*. It is concerned with the differences between the Stream-Enterer (*sotāpanna*) and the Arahat (§3.2.3).

##### ii The stage of Once-Returner, *sakadāgāmin*

When it comes to the *sakadāgāmin*, none of the texts have a particular interest.

##### iii The stage of Non-Returner, *opapātika / anāgāmin*.

On the subject of the *opapātika / anāgāmin* there is once again difference and specialisation between SN and AN, while, as in the case of the *sotāpanna*, DN and MN contain only the standard expressions. SN, however, contains an attainment formula. It emphasises the condition for the attainment of this stage of abandoning the five lower fetters (SN

<sup>90</sup> See Manné, 1990 : footnote 1.

V 177f), and offers a method for this (SN III 566). It demands further progress than the *sotāpanna* with the five grasping groups, *pañcupādānakkhandha* (SN III 167f). AN says where, i.e. in which heaven, one might encounter an *opapātika* (AN II 186). It is concerned with the difference between a Returner, and a Non-Returner, discriminating between these two stages through conditions based on fetters (AN I 63), qualifying the non-Returner through his mental capacities (AN I 64), or through a simile (AN IV 74). It offers a method for attaining this stage, and says that this stage is rather frequently attained (AN I 64, II 160, IV 63, etc). It is aware of the difficulty of distinguishing between stages (AN I 118). This specialisation shows that of the two Nikāyas which interested themselves most in the Four Stages HCH, the SN was primarily concerned with the stage of *sotāpanna*, while the AN was primarily concerned with the stage of *anāgāmin*.

Only AN is concerned with the problem that each stage could seemingly be attained in a variety of ways. It asserts that all *sotāpannas* are equal, as are all *sakadāgāmins*, *anāgāmins* and Arahats (AN IV 364).

## 5 THE USE - AND ABUSE - OF THE FOUR STAGES CASE HISTORY

I said in the introduction to this chapter that the concepts *samsāra* and *karma* required a HCH that extended over more than one lifetime. The original purpose of this HCH may have been to provide this, but its appearance in the texts shows how manifold its utility was. In this chapter we will look at how the DN, MN, SN and AN use, and abuse, this case history. In order to facilitate the comparison, common headings will be used. These will be:

- 1      The Use of the Four Stages HCH in Debates: the Four Stages HCH as the main reason for following the Buddha's Teaching.

- 2      The Four Stages HCH and the promotion of the efficacy of the Buddha's Teaching: the need for measurable and definable attainments.
- 3      The Four Stages HCH as conferring status and rewards.
- 4      Attempts to relate the Four Stages HCH to other aspects of the Teaching:
  - i      the attempt to relate it to other sequences of development.
  - ii      the attempt to relate it to technical aspects of the Teaching.
- 5      The abuse of the Four Stages HCH.
- 6      Actual CH's.
- 7      The differences between the Nikāyas in their treatment of the Four Stages HCH.

### 5.1 The Use of the Four Stages HCH in the Debates: DN, MN, AN: The Four Stages HCH as the main reason for following the Buddha's Teaching

The Four Stages HCH is connected with the debate tradition in two ways: (1) it is proposed as a means for winning a debate, and (2) it has attainment formulas connected to some of its stages.

In the *Mahāli Sutta* (DN 6), replying to a challenge, the Buddha says that the reason for following his Teaching is in order to attain the four stages (expressed as in Version A).<sup>91</sup> On two other occasions it is claimed that it is precisely the existence of these four stages that differentiates the Buddha's system from other systems, and that this is the

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<sup>91</sup> This sutta has been discussed in Manné, 1990 : 4.1.

basis for an assertion (a lion's roar)<sup>92</sup> in a debate. However determinedly the importance of the Four Stages HCH is proclaimed, it never *wins* a debate! Debates are won on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta hypothetical case history.<sup>93</sup> This fact rather detracts from the force of the assertions in the suttas cited above.

## 5.2 The Four Stages HCH and the promotion of the efficacy of the Buddha's Teaching: the need for definable and measurable attainments

This case history shows that it was necessary and important for the Buddhists to have definable and measurable attainments. In this way they were true psychologists! The Four Stages HCH is used to prove that the Buddha's method works. There is an emphasis that everyone who practises, attains. The Buddha says, "There is indeed in this Order of monks no doubt or misgiving in a single monk as to the Buddha, the Order, the Dhamma, the Way or the Practice. Of these five hundred monks here, Ānanda, the most backward is a Stream-Winner, one saved from the Downfall, assured, bound for Enlightenment" (AN II 80). Similarly, the Buddha states that simply by following his method for a day and a night, one of the stages: that of either the *sakadāgāmin*, the *anāgāmin*, or the *sotāpanna*, would be attained (AN V 86).

The attainment of stages is used to quantitatively demonstrate the effectiveness of hearing a sermon preached by the Buddha. In the SN, thirty monks who still have fetters (*samyojanā*) come to see the Buddha for help. The Buddha recognises their state, and, in order for them all to

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<sup>92</sup> Cūlaśihanāda Sutta (MN 11); AN II 238; see Manné, forthcoming (a). Also in the AN the stages and their fruits are called the 8th *marvel* (*atthā accariyā abhutā dhammā*) of the Buddha's dharma and discipline (*dhammavinaya*). AN IV 204.

<sup>93</sup> See Manné, forthcoming (a), 2.1.

attain release, preaches a sermon. They all duly attain release (*bhikkhūnam anupādāya āsavehi cittāni vimuccīṣu*. SN II 187ff). The instant freeing from intoxicants (*āsavas*) by means of a sermon preached by the Buddha is most characteristically a SN feature, although it occurs in other texts (SN II 187ff, III 68, 132; IV 20, etc.).

The four stages HCH is imposed on other HCHs (§2.3), thus providing for them a terminology capable of making vague notions of progress measurable.

## 5.3 The Four Stages used to confer status and rewards

There is a certain innocence in the way the texts exploit this aspect of the utility of the Four Stages HCH. The Four Stages are mentioned in three fantasy suttas:<sup>94</sup> the *Jana-Vasabha Sutta* (DN 18), the *Mahā-Govinda Sutta* (DN 19), and the *Sakka-Pañha Sutta* (DN 21). In the *Jana-Vasabha Sutta* (DN 18), the Buddha's affirmation that there are large numbers of people in a certain region, Nādika, who have attained one or other of the first three stages after death is of central importance. Ānanda immediately realises that if such attainments are confirmed for the faithful of one area, politics and good public relations require that they had be confirmed for the faithful of another. The issue is corrected by means of a fantastical story. The sutta emphasises the importance of the possession of a named, defined stage of attainment.

The *Mahā-Govinda Sutta* (DN 19), the second of these Fantasy suttas, asserts that every disciple has attained one of these four stages: it is comparable in function with the suttas in the previous section. This sutta's position on the Four Stages HCH is that merely becoming a disciple is enough to be rewarded with the stage of *sotāpanna*. This

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<sup>94</sup> See fn.12.

suggests that this sutta has its origins at a time when the term *sotāpanna* meant simply "convert".

Only the stage *sotāpanna* is mentioned in the third of these fantasy suttas, the *Sakka-Pañha Sutta* (DN 21), and here it is the god Sakka who lays claim both to being a disciple of the Buddha and to having attained this stage. It forms part of his credentials<sup>95</sup> when he presents himself to the Buddha and in this way demonstrates the link between stage and status. This sutta demonstrates that a stage could convey status. A god must have some measurable attainment!

The innocence with which the texts exploit this HCH is somewhat betrayed, however, in the *Nalakapāna Sutta* (MN 68). This sutta explains why the Buddha uses the 4 stages .. "the Tathāgata does not have the purpose of defrauding people nor the purpose of cajoling people nor the purpose of gains, honour, fame and material advantages, nor the thought: 'Let people know me thus' when he explains the uprisings<sup>96</sup> in which are disciples who have deceased and passed away, saying: "Such a one has uprisen in one, such a one has uprisen in another."<sup>97</sup> But there are, .. young men of family who have faith and are of great enthusiasm, of great joyousness and who, having heard this, focus their minds on suchness.. this will be for their weal and happiness for a long time" (MN I 465).<sup>98</sup> The text that follows shows clearly that the "uprisings" spoken about are the four stages. This explanation suggests that the four stages are an invention whose purpose was to inspire dedication to the practice and to endow it with a tangible result.

The *Tevija-Vacchagotta Sutta* (MN 70) is forthright in offering stages as rewards. It proclaims, "For a disciple who has faith in the

Teacher's instruction and lives in unison with it, monks, one of two fruits is to be expected: profound knowledge here and now, or, if there is any basis (for rebirth remaining), the state of no-return" (MN I 481).<sup>99</sup> The second option can only be attested by the Buddha or another of like capacities, who can see the arising of beings as they transmigrate from life to life. When it comes to faith and practice, this categorisation ensures that there are no losers.

Finally, in the *Dakkhinavibhanga Sutta* (MN 142), the four stages are used explicitly to grade the reward concomitant upon the giving of gifts. The higher the stage of the recipient, the greater his status and the greater the reward for the donor.

#### **5.4 Attempts to relate the Four Stages HCH to other aspects of the Teaching**

##### **5.4.1 The Four Stages HCH in relationship to other sequences of development**

Several examples of this from the SN and the AN have been presented in §2.3. Although the two abhidhammic suttas of the DN, 33 and 34 may be said to be doing this, their organisation seems more random than structured. The same applies to the list of the monks attainments and practices in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118), quoted below, as the exposition in the sutta has little relationship to this list. The difference between the MN, whose examples I will quote below, and the AN and SN, whose examples were given in §2.3, is that the MN is trying to collate as many as the elements of the Teaching as possible,

<sup>95</sup> See Manné, 1990 : 2.1.ii.

<sup>96</sup> *upapatti* "rebirths". the translater is capturing the play on words in the Pali.

<sup>97</sup> 'Qui s'excuse s'accuse.' Obviously this utterance has been made in defense against just such an accusation.

<sup>98</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS II 138.

<sup>99</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS II 156. *Saddhassa bhikkhave sāvakassa satthu sāsane pariyoṭaya vattato dvinnam phalānam aññataram phalam pāṭikankham: dittheva dhamme aññā, sati vā upādisese anāgāmitā ti.* Note the term *anāgāmin* is used here.

while the SN and AN are imposing the Four Stages as a system of measurement upon other HCHs, or sequences of development.

An attempt to locate the four stages in a larger developmental schema is described in the Akañkheyya Sutta (MN 6). Its stages are touchingly expressed in the form of a sequence of aspirations a monk may have. These are:

- i "May I be agreeable to co-practitioners and pleasant to them, esteemed and respected" (*sabrahmacārīnam piyo c'assam manāpo garu bhāvanīyo cāti*. MN I 33).
- ii "May I be one who receives the requisites of robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines for the sick" (*lābhī assam cīvara-piṇḍapāta-senāsana-gilāna-paccaya-bhesajja-parikkhārānan ti*).<sup>100</sup>
- iii "May the services of those from whom I enjoy (the above) be of great merit, of great advantage".<sup>101</sup>
- iv 'May the benefit be great for those of my kith and kin who are spirits who have passed on, and who are aware of it with peaceful minds' (*ye me nātisālohitā petā kālakatā pasannacittā anussaranti tesam tam mahapphalam assa mahānisamsan-ti*)
- v "May I be one who overcomes aversion and liking, and may aversion not overcome me, may I fare along constantly conquering any aversion that has arisen" (*aratiratisaho assam na ca mam arati saheyya, uppānam arati abhibhuyya vihareyyan-ti*)<sup>102</sup>
- vi "May I be one who overcomes fear and dread, and may fear and dread not overcome me, may I fare along constantly conquering any fear and dread that has arisen" (*bhayabheravasaho assam*

<sup>100</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS I 41.

<sup>101</sup> Tr. ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS I 42.

- na ca mam bhayabheravam saheyya, uppānam bhayabheravam abhibhuyya abhibhuyya vihareyyan-ti*).<sup>103</sup>
- vii "May I be one who at will, without trouble, and without difficulty is possessed of the four *jhānas*, which are dependent on the clearest state of consciousness and which are the abodes of happiness in this very life-time" (*cattunnam jhānānam ābhicetasikānam ditthadhammasukhavihārānam nikāmalābhī assam akiçchalābhī akasiralābhī ti*).
  - viii "Those incorporeal deliverances which are calmed, transcending forms, may I fare along having realised them while in the body" (*ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te kāyena phassitvā viharreyyan-ti*).<sup>104</sup>
  - ix As *sotāpanna* description, Version A (1).
  - x As *sakadāgāmī* description, Version A (2).
  - xi As *opapātika* description, Version A (3).
  - xii As SPS-HCH, Stage III, iii (*iddhis*).<sup>105</sup>
  - xiii As SPS-HCH, Stage III, iv (clair-audience).
  - xiv As SPS-HCH, Stage III, v (understanding the heart and mind of others).
  - xv As SPS-HCH, Stage III, vi (knowing the details of one's former lives).
  - xvi As SPS-HCH, Stage III, vii (*dhamma-cakkhu*).
  - xvii As the formula for the fourth stage, §2.1, Version A, 4.

In the *Atthakanāgara Sutta* (MN 52) there is an attempt to relate Stages 3 and 4 to the *jhānas*, the *brahmavihāras* and three of the four

<sup>103</sup> Tr. ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Tr. ibid.

<sup>105</sup> See Manné (forthcoming b) §3, 6.

āyatanas (*ākāsañcañcāyatana*, *viññānañcañcāyatana*, *ākiñcaññāyatana*).<sup>106</sup> A refrain occurs at each stage in the sequence: "Firm in this he attains the destruction of the intoxicants. If he does not attain the destruction of the intoxicants then by this attachment to *dhamma*, by this delight in *dhamma*, by the destruction of the five fetters binding to this lower (shore), he is of spontaneous uprising, one who attains nibbāna there, not liable to return from that world."<sup>107</sup> The refrain suggests that this attainment could happen at any time the *jhānas*, the *brahmavihāras* and the three āyatanas were being experienced. This close relationship between the attainment of the 3rd and the 4th stage occurs frequently in MN (52, 64, 70, 73), SN and AN.

In the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118) there is a list of attainments of the Order of monks which starts with the Four Stages as its first members, and then continues with various practices:

- i      Arahat
- ii     *opapātika*
- iii    *sakadāgāmin*
- iv    *sotāpanna*
- v    "the four applications of mindfulness" (*cattāro satipatṭhānā*)
- vi    "the four right concentrations of mind" (*cattāro sammāppadhbhānā*)
- vii   "the four bases of psychic power" (*cattāro iddhipādā*)
- viii   "the five controlling faculties" (*pañca indriyāni*)

<sup>106</sup> Cf. the *MahāMālunkya Sutta* (MN 64) which links Stages 3 an 4 with the *jhānas* as above and with two of the āyatanas.

<sup>107</sup> Tr. Horner, MLS II 15. Horner translates the term *āsava* by "canker". I have replaced this with the term "intoxicant" for the sake of consistency within this article. *So tattha thito āsavānam khayam pāpuṇāti; no ce āsavānam khayam pāpuṇāti ten' eva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannam orambhāgiyānam samyojanānam parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tatthaparinibbāyi anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā.* MN I 350.

- ix    "the five powers" (*pañca balāni*)
- x    "the seven links in awakening" (*satta bojjhangāni*)
- xi    "the Noble Eightfold Path" (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*)
- xii   "friendliness" (*mettā*)
- xiii   "compassion" (*karunā*)
- xiv   "sympathetic joy" (*muditā*)
- xv    "equanimity" (*upekhā*)
- xvi   "on the unpleasant" (*asubha*)
- xvii   "perception of impermanence" (*aniccasanñā*)
- xviii   "mindfulness on in-breathing and out-breathing" (*ānāpānasati*).<sup>108</sup>

This list does not make a lot of sense as an ordered sequence of development. It is followed in the sutta by a detailed exposition of the practice of "mindfulness on in-breathing and out-breathing" (*ānāpānasati*, no. xviii. above), which, we are informed, is the practice that causes the complete development of the four applications of mindfulness (no. v. above), which practice, in its turn, causes the complete development of the seven links in awakening (no. x. above). No link between these practices and the Four Stages HCH is offered. Although this process of this development forms an interesting HCH in itself, there is no link between its features and the sequence of practices listed in the earlier part of the sutta. The Four Stages HCH is here attached to an already existing list.

#### 5.4.2 The Four Stages HCH in relationship to technical aspects of the Teaching

While DN and MN do not concern themselves with this, SN and AN show a large concern for the technical aspects of the Teaching.

<sup>108</sup> This list is exhaustively studied in Gethin, 1992.

They introduce features that are not found in the other Nikāyas, they add further conditions for the attainment of certain of the stages and propose methods for the attainments of others. Examples occur in Section 3.

## 5.5 The abuse of the Four Stages HCH

There are no examples of this in DN, but MN has several. With reference to the utterance cited above, "the Tathāgata does not have the purpose of defrauding people nor the purpose of cajoling people nor the purpose of gains, honour, fame and material advantages, nor the thought: 'Let people know me thus' when he explains the uprisings in which are disciples who have deceased and passed away, saying: "Such a one has uprisen in one, such a one has uprisen in another," one must be forgiven for saying again what was first said in a footnote (see §5.3), "Qui s'excuse s'accuse!" There are examples in MN, SN and AN which show how this system was abused in just the way denied above.

The use of the Four Stages HCH to provide measurable attainments seems honest enough, as does their capacity to confer status. The use of Stages 3 and 4 as rewards, as in the *Tevijja-Vacchagotta Sutta* (MN 70, see §5.3), comes close to manipulation. Certain suttas show an inventive abuse of this system of attribution and classification of attainments.

The attribution of the attainment of the stage *opapātika* in the *Dhātuvinbhaga Sutta* (MN 140) is the Buddha's way of getting out of a fix. The monk Pukkusāti has received lengthy instruction from the Buddha without guessing the identity of his teacher until the end of the discourse. Pukkusāti apologises for this transgression and asks for ordination, and the Buddha sends him away to fulfil the requirements with regard to bowl and robe. Unfortunately, while trying to obtain these, Pukkusati is killed by a cow. The monks who report this to the Buddha, refer to Pukkusati in their report as "(that) young man of family who the Lord (just) instructed by means of a brief instruction," and ask to be

informed of his future condition of rebirth. Obviously in this situation the Buddha has to say something. Pukkusati's earnest commitment to the Teaching, which forms the substance of this sutta, requires some recognition. Nevertheless, the Buddha's words in the situation seem to indicate that he finds the question tiresome. He prefaces his response with this description of Pukkusati, "Pukkusati, the young man of family, was wise; he entered the path of application to the *dhamma*; he did not plague me with disputatious questions about the *dhamma*," and goes on to confer the state of *opapātika* upon him (MN III 247).

The situation is resolved the same way upon the death of the brahman Brahmāyu, who was of immense importance and very highly venerated, and who became a lay disciple (*Brahmāyu Sutta*, MN 91). The texts use the same formulaic expression in both cases (MN II 146 = MN III 247). This stage is regularly conferred on sick bhikkhus who die after hearing a discourse from the Buddha. It is the only stage that is conferred after the death of the disciple (e.g. MN 91, 140; SN V 346 Dhīgavu). The practice of conferring the stage of *anāgamin* on an ailing bhikkhu who has died after hearing a discourse from the Buddha is attested also (AN III 381). This attests to the power of the Buddha and his Teaching.

People's fears were played upon in order to entice them to convert. Followers are especially encouraged to convert their friends and family, to ground them in the *Credo* (SN V 264f), especially in order that they escape from the fear of all evil destinies (rebirths) and states of punishments.

There are rewards in terms of the Four Stages HCH simply for being a lay disciple. Dhammadinna, a lay disciple, tells the Buddha that he does not have time to learn the Buddha's discourses, because he lives a householder's life, has a family, and indulges in luxuries like perfumes and money, and asks the Buddha for a different way. The Buddha recommends that he train himself as in the Beliefs and Practices formula. Dhammadinna claims that he already fulfils these conditions. The Buddha acknowledges him, "It is an advantage for you, Dhammadinna, it is a

benefit for you, Dhammadinna, that the *sotāpattiphala* has been explained."<sup>109</sup> (SN V 407f)

The most flagrant example of the abuse of this system is at the same time not without its charm. This is the occasion where the Buddha proclaims that the monk, Sarakāni, who had died, had become a *sotāpanna* (SN V 375ff). This proclamation is seriously questioned and challenged by the other monks. "A strange thing indeed! A wonder indeed! Nowadays anyone may become a stream-winner. Sarakāni failed in the training and took to drink!" they say, evidently disgusted (SN V 375). The Buddha replies, "How could a lay disciple who had for a long time taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha go to hell?" The reason the Buddha takes up this position becomes clear in the following sutta (SN V 378): it is because the Teaching is correctly taught by a Sammāsambuddha that it always leads to results, just as well-sown seeds always grow into plants. Obviously in the case of failure, the credibility of the Buddha is in question and must be defended.

A further amusing example shows that the stages were treated as a means of promotion or demotion, in terms of the prestige which the acknowledged attainment of a stage automatically conferred. The disreputable bhikkhu Kokālika taunts the Brahmā Tudu who has come from his brāhma world out of compassion to pay him a visit, "Didn't the Buddha call you a Non-Returner? And now you have come back here! Look how far you have gone wrong!" (*Nanu tvam āvuso Bhagavatā anāgāmī byākato // atha \*kiñcarahi idhāgato // passa yāvañca te idam aparaddhan-ti.* SN I 149 = AN V 171).<sup>110</sup>

## 5.6 Purportedly Actual Case Histories

There are none of these in the DN. The case histories of Pakkusati (MN 140) and Brahmāyu (MN 91) are purportedly real, that is, a named individual is attributed with making the transition from one stage to another. This type of case history must, however, be regarded as most doubtful. The circumstances which surround them show that this is simply a device to inspire conviction in the efficacy of the Buddha's Teaching.

There are purportedly actual case histories in the SN. One of these is that of the disciple Dīghāvu, who is ailing. This case history contains three steps: two comprise the Buddha's directions regarding his practice; the third comprises his attainment after death. In step one, the Buddha advises Dīghāvu to train himself in such a way as to become a *sotāpanna*, as in the Beliefs and Practices formula (SN V 344ff). Dīghāvu claims that he already has this attainment. In step two, the Buddha advises him to, "to dwell contemplating impermanence in all the activities, conscious of Ill in impermanence, conscious of there being no self in what is Ill, conscious of abandoning, of dispassion, of cessation" (*sabbasankhāresu aniccānupassī viharāhi // anicce dukkhasaññī dukkhe anattasaññī pahānasaññī virāgasāññī nirodhasaññī t.* SN V 345).<sup>111</sup> Dīghāvu claims that he already possesses this attainment. At this point Dīghāvu admits that he is worried about the state his father will fall into should he die. This shows some remaining attachment on his part. His father promptly reassures him, and directs him to follow the Buddha's teaching. Dīghāvu dies shortly after this.<sup>112</sup> In step three, Dīghāvu, posthumously, attains the stage of *anāgamin*: when the Buddha is

<sup>109</sup> I am grateful to Professor Dr. Oskar v. Hinüber for help with this translation.

<sup>110</sup> The more usual form is *carasi*.

<sup>111</sup> Tr. Woodward, KS V 400.

<sup>112</sup> For contemporary cases of death after parental permission see Levine, 1986; Siegel, 1986.

informed of his demise, and asked about his destiny, he confers it upon him.

A further purportedly real case history in the SN concerns the ailing monk Khemaka, whose self-diagnosis with regard to his own stage of development is that, "I do not say 'I am' with regard to body, or feeling, or perception, or *sankhāra*, or consciousness, nor in relationship to what is different from any of these. But, friends, I still possess the 'I am' with regard to the five grasping groups" (*na rūpam asmiti vadāmi na pi aññatra rūpā asmiti vadāmi// Na vedanam/ Na saññam/ Na sankhāre/ Na viññānam asmiti vadāmi na pi aññatra rūpā asmiti vadāmi// Api ca me āvuse pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu asmiti adhigatam ayam aham asmiti ca na samanupassāmi*. SN III 130). Upon teaching how the last subtle remnant of the "I am" conceit can be got rid of, Khemaka gets rid of it himself, and, together with 60 of his audience, attains freedom from the *āsavās* (SN III 126-132). This teaching shows how to make the transition from *anāgamin*, expressed in the text as "*pancorambhāgiyāni saññojanāni pahināni*", to Arahat (SN III 130). The method prescribed is to "contemplate the rise and fall of the five grasping groups thus: this is body, this is the arising of body, this is the cessation of body; (and so forth for all the others)." This case history has unusual, non-stereotypical details.

The AN authenticates the Four Stages HCH by attributing the Buddha with the fruits of each of these stages, thus making them a part of his personal case history (AN I 23).

## 5.7 The differences between the Nikāyas in their treatment of the Four Stages HCH

These differences can be summarised if we take the original headings for this chapter and mark which categories are common to all of these Nikāyas. This is done in Table I below. This schema gives an indication of the differences of interest between the DN, MN, SN and AN. There are certain evident differences between the Nikāyas which have been referred to above, and which therefore only need mentioning here. This HCH appears in the DN mainly in lists or in debate suttas. Because there is nothing original in the DN's usage of this HCH, I conclude that the DN incorporated it because it existed in the material of the reciters of the other Nikāyas (or their early versions). With regard to the MN, however, I think the case is quite different: there is evidence of original usage of this HCH. I argued that the MN "was the collection which arose to serve the need to introduce new converts to the character of the Leader, the Buddha, and the important disciples, to integrate new converts into their values and their way of life, and to provide them with the fundamentals of the Teaching and the Practise."<sup>113</sup>

One important requirement of a text with this purpose would be to encourage the converts by providing them with attainable goals. MN does indeed encourage disciples in many ways that they can and will attain the stages during their lifetimes or in the worst of circumstances, after their deaths.

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<sup>113</sup> Manné, 1990 : 4.3.

TABLE I. Categories common to these Nikāyas.

<i>1. The Use of the Four Stages HCH in Debates: the Four Stages HCH as the main reason for following the Buddha's Teaching.</i>			
DN	MN		AN
<i>2. The Four Stages HCH and the promotion of the efficacy of the Buddha's Teaching: the need for measurable and definable attainments.</i>			
DN	MN	SN	AN
<i>3. The Four Stages HCH as conferring status and rewards.</i>			
DN	MN	SN	AN
<i>4. Attempts to relate the Four Stages HCH to other aspects of the Teaching:</i>			
<i>i. Its relationship to other sequences of development.</i>			
DN	MN		
<i>ii. Its relationship to technical aspects of the Teaching.</i>			
		SN	AN
<i>5. The abuse of the Four Stages HCH.</i>			
	MN	SN	AN
<i>6. Purportedly actual CH's.</i>			
	MN	SN	AN

What we notice in MN is best shown in a table and appears as Table II. The stage number appears at the top of the table and corresponds to the stage as in the standard versions. The number in each column is the number of the sutta in which the stage appears. The table shows the preponderant concern for the final stages, stage 3 and stage 4. Stages 1 and 2 are named in only four suttas, MN 6, 68, 118, and 142.

TABLE II.

Stage	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
6	6	6	6	6
			52	52
			64	64
	68	68		
			73	73
			91	
	118	118	118	118
			140	
	142	142	142	142

They are never referred to on their own, but only occur in the context of the Four Stages HCH. Stage 3, besides occurring in the four above, occurs in three other suttas, MN 52, 64 and 73, where it is named with stage 4, and two suttas, MN 91 and 140, on its own. There is no great

regularity in the naming of the final of the four stages which occurs in the four first named suttas with all of the other stages, and in four other suttas, MN 52, 64, 73 and 68, where it occurs with stage 3. Usually when all four of the stages are named the last stage is expressed as in (4) of Version A, but once, under these conditions, stage 4 is named *aññā* (MN 68). This preoccupation with stages 3 and 4 shows MN's concern to guarantee results with regard to the purpose of the Teaching: the end of rebirth.

Insofar as the SN and the AN are concerned, the large proportion of quotations from these texts in §§2 and 3 attest their attempts to understand and to make sense of the Teaching of the Four Stages HCH. These texts take an "academic" approach to the Four Stages HCH. Probably only intended for monks with a certain commitment and experience they do not need to make compromises. They study the system and the technical details. In adding further conditions they attempt to add detail and clarity. Although it contains its share of suttas abusing this system, the SN's inclusion of the case of Sarakāni shows a critical attitude not found on this theme in the other Nikāyas.

I have discussed the individual character of the DN and the MN (Manné, 1990) and none of the information here points to a need to change my position. This chapter does, however, permit us to modify the current view on the SN and the AN, especially with regard to their purpose, and the nature of their composers and reciters. Bronkhorst has said that these Nikāyas attained their peculiar shapes at "a time when efforts were made to distil from the tradition lists of items that could be considered to embody the essence of the teaching of the Buddha, being rearrangements of traditional utterances."<sup>114</sup> What kind of people were attempting to "distil from the tradition"? Who were these "distillers"? and were they really only "distilling"? We can infer from this study that the "distillers" were not ordinary practitioners, ordinary monks or followers,

but a highly specialised kind of practitioner: scholar-practitioners or practitioner-researchers: monks dedicated both to their practice and to preserving as accurately as possible the method and technique of their practice and the knowledge surrounding it. The questions they address are: "What is it?" "How is it done?" "How does it fit together?" These are questions worthy of any scholar. The SN and the AN show a much smaller interest in telling stories than do the DN and the MN. The interest of their compilers was in finding out as comprehensively as possible on a practical level what exactly the Buddha taught and how it worked.

## 6 HOW THE FOUR STAGES HCH CAME ABOUT

I have argued (§4.3) that the stages *sotāpanna* and arahat can be regarded as pertaining to early Buddhism. In the beginning, therefore, there were just two stages: that of convert and that of (full) attainer. How then did the other two stages and the Four Stages HCH come about? As the Four Stages HCH cannot be taken to form part of Original Buddhism it must be either an entirely new and independent invention or an organising structure for some original elements. The first possibility can be rejected. As Bronkhorst has said, religious traditions tend to be conservative and do not as a rule invent complete novelties.<sup>115</sup> This leaves us to explore the notion that the Four Stages HCH is an organising structure for original elements.

It is certainly an organising structure.

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<sup>114</sup> Bronkhorst, 1985 : 316.

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<sup>115</sup> Bronkhorst 1986 : xii.

## 6.1 The Four Stages HCH as a systematising and organising structure

The Four Stages HCH is first of all an organising structure for the number of rebirths awaiting the practitioner. The terminology indicates beyond any doubt that the terms *sakadāgāmin* and *anāgāmin* were created to express the attainment of having to suffer only one more, or no more rebirths in human form. The original, elemental version of the Four Stages HCH must have started as a way of defining soteriological attainment in terms of number of rebirths. See Table III.

**TABLE III. Freedom from rebirth in terms of a diminishing number of rebirths.**

<i>sotāpanna</i>	(7 rebirths)
<i>sakadāgāmin</i>	1 rebirth
<i>anāgāmin/</i> <i>opapātika</i>	he is characterised by non-returning to this world
Arahat	no further rebirths.

Linked to the idea of escaping from rebirth in the Buddha's Teaching is the idea of the escape from suffering: The Buddha taught that his method led to the end of suffering. The standard version of this case history includes phrases that express this. See Table IV.

**TABLE IV. Freedom from suffering.**

<i>sotāpanna</i>	freedom from hell or from punishment
<i>sakadāgāmin</i>	after only one more rebirth he makes an end of suffering
<i>anāgāmin/</i> <i>opapātika</i>	no rebirths in human form
Arahat	(end of suffering).

Once this terminology existed, however, its implications would have to be explored, in particular its relationship to other aspects of the Teaching. Certain attainments had already been defined, perhaps even by the Buddha himself. The compilers of the texts were faced with the problem of how these related to the newly existing Four Stages HCH. Very many different elements of the Teaching become united through being attributed to one of the stages (§2.3). The standard version includes also freedom from certain mental and emotional problems. See Table V.

TABLE V. Freedom from certain mental and emotional problems.

<i>sotāpanna</i>	the disappearance of 3 fetters <i>tīṇnam samyojanānām parikkhayā</i>
<i>sakadāgāmin</i>	the diminution of passion, hatred and delusion <i>rāga-dosa-mohānam tanutīā</i>
<i>anāgāmin/ opapātika</i>	the disappearance of the five fetters which belong to the lower world <i>pañcannam orambhāgiyānām samyojānam parikkhayā</i>
Arahat	having seen for himself in this very lifetime, through his own higher knowledge, the release of heart and mind that is free from āsavās <i>anāsavam cetovimuttim paññāvimuttim diṭṭhe vadhamme sayam abhinnā sacchikatvā</i>

Evidently the tradition had handed down an attainment, or a sequence of attainments related to being free of certain fetters or bonds. There are several problems here for the contemporary researcher. One is that the original researchers, or distillers, did not specify consistently what the relationship was between these bonds and this case history: the bonds also appear independently in the texts or linked to other hypothetical case histories (e.g. that of the *dhammadakkhu* at AN I 242). There is the further problem that the concept of fetters (*saṃyojana*) is in

itself an organising or systematising concept, linking various ideas. The AN, for example, defines 10 of these: the five fetters which bind to the lower states (*orambhāgiya*)<sup>116</sup> and five which bind to the higher states (*uddhambhāgiya*): craving for fine-material existence (*ūparāga*), craving for immaterial existence (*arūparāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and ignorance (*avijjā*, AN V 17; SN V 61f).<sup>117</sup> The AN also has the three substantially different categories of fetters: those binding to the lower states, those binding to the taking up of rebirth (*uppattipatiṭṭabhika*) and those binding to the taking up of existence (*bhavapatiṭṭabhika*) which it relates respectively to the stages *sakadāgāmin*, *uddhamso ta akiniṭṭhagāmin*, *antarāparinibbāyin* and Arahant (AN II 134; IV 13f, 145f). Besides this attainment in terms of fetters, as Table V shows, the tradition inherited the notion that soteriological evolution included the diminution of certain emotions: those of passion and hatred (*rāga-dosa*), and also diminution of the state of delusionment (*moha*). The evidence that the tradition found these aspects important and relevant is that it included them within the Four Stages HCH organising structure.

There were also other attainments, which seem to have been floating around, so to speak, and these were brought into this structure rather less coherently than the above examples by having it imposed upon them. Among these, particularly with regard to the *sotāpanna*, is morality in terms of training in the *sīlas*; familiarity with important aspects of the Teaching such as the Causal Law (*paticcasamuppāda*); the Eightfold Path (*atthangika magga*); freedom from a number of wrong views; a vision of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and liability to change (*aviparināmadhamma*); and the possession of qualities (*indriyas*) of various sorts; and with particular regard to the *anāgāmin* clarity about

<sup>116</sup> See §2.1. The first five fetters may also be called *nīvarana*, (AN III 63) or *upakkilesa* (AN III 16).

<sup>117</sup> Tr. Nyānatiloka, 1980.

the Teaching "If it were not, it would not be mine; it shall not become, for me it shall not become" (*no cassa no ca me siyā na bhavissāmi na me bhavissati*).

In summary, then, the Four Stages HCH probably came about as follows. Two categories of practitioner existed from the time of the Buddha. These were the converts, and those who had attained the goal. During the development of Buddhism the issue of rebirth came to be increasingly important, and with it, probably developing in parallel, the issue of whether Liberation was attained during this lifetime or after death. As it was part of the advantages of having attained the goal that the monk would be free from suffering and rebirth, questions began to be asked about progress towards that goal. Two further stages were defined in terms of the number of rebirths to be expected before the final liberation, and their location. The interest in the stages grew. They were further subdivided. The four stages became attributed with desirable developmental attainments which had already been defined in other contexts where the Buddhists were also faced with a need to qualify and to quantify stages of development. Eventually they reached the stage of definition in which we find them today. The Four Stages HCH offers a very tidy structure to the doctrine of Liberation in terms of sequence and progress.

## AND TODAY?

I started off with Sharf's article and I will end with it.

Sharf refers to the four levels of Enlightenment twice in his article (section V) - "the fourth and final stage of sainthood (arahat)" and "*sotāpanna* – the first of four levels of enlightenment" - without comment, thus it may be that he takes the existence of these stages for granted. Sharf shows us in §VI that the use - and abuse - of at least one element of this case history continues today. Contemporary Buddhist

teachers of meditation are debating among each other - among other things - what *sotāpanna* is. They are debating indirectly, rather than publicly, each implying rather than saying too obviously, that the version of this state arrived at after practising their particular variation of Buddhist meditation is better than that of their rivals and leads to faster results. The impression conveyed is of people chasing after altered states of consciousness, as if they were material goods in the Harrods Xmas sale, each trying to get hold of the best one!

In a religion that preaches detachment, the spiritual materialism demonstrated by excessive attachment to measurable, qualifiable attainments is inappropriate. That is perhaps why muddle exists about all of the proposed stages both in the early texts and at the present time.

La Conversion

Joy Manné

## ABBREVIATIONS

Texts as in Bechert, 1988.

DB = Dialogues of the Buddha (Rhys Davids, 1899)

GS = Gradual Sayings (Woodward & Hare, 1932-36).

KS = Kindred Sayings (C.A.F. Rhys Davids & Woodward).

MLS = Middle Length Sayings (Horner, 1954).

BHSD = Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary.

CPD = Critical Pāli Dictionary.

PTSD = Pāli English Dictionary.

tr. = translation

## TRANSLATIONS

- Horner, I.B. (1954-1959), *Middle Length Sayings*, tr. of *Majjhima Nikāya*. 3 Vols. London : Pali Text Society.
- Rhys Davids, C.A.F. (1900, 1922), *A Buddhist manual of psychological ethics*, tr. of *Dhammasaṅgani*. London : Pali Text Society.
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## The Nigamanas of the Sūmaṅgalavilāśinī and the Kaṅkhāvitaranī

Pāli texts usually end in a brief paragraph called *nigamana*, which corresponds in meaning and content to the *explicit* of mediaeval European manuscripts. In two instances these brief, though highly valuable, texts have been omitted from the respective PTS editions for reasons unknown. Consequently it seems useful, if not necessary, to provide the relevant paragraphs here on the basis of the *Chatthaśaṅgāyana* Edition (B<sup>e</sup>), because they contain information important for the composition or history of the respective texts.

I. Sūmaṅgalavilāśinī  
(B<sup>e</sup> 1968 III 250,1-251,6)

Nigamanakathā

ettāvatā ca  
āyācito Sūmaṅgalaparivenañivāsinā thiragunena  
Daṭhānāgasamghattherena theravam̄sanvayena | 1 |  
Dīghāgamavarassa dasabalaguṇaparidīpanassa atṭhakatham  
yam ārabhim Sūmaṅgalavilāśinī nāma nāmena | 2 |  
sā hi mahātṭhakathāya sāram ādāya niṭhitā  
esā ekāśitipamāṇāya pāliyā bhāṇavārehi | 3 |  
ekūnasataṭhimatto Visuddhimaggo pi bhāṇavārehi  
atthappakāsanatthāya āgamānam kato yasmā | 4 |  
tasmā tena sahā 'yam atṭhakathā bhāṇavāraganānāya  
suparimitaparicchinnam cattālisasatam hoti | 5 |  
sabbam cattālisādhikasataparimānam bhāṇavārehi evam  
samayam pakāsayantim Mahāvihāre nivāsinam | 6 |  
mūlakaṭṭhakathāsāram ādāya mayā imam karontena  
yam puññam upacitam tena hotu sabbo sukhī loko ti | 7 |